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Abstract of Thesis

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Title of Thesis.....Slouching Towards Jerusalem: Reactive Nationalism in the Irish, Israel and Palestinian Novel, 1985-2005.....

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..... **Degree** PhD.....

The Irish, Israeli and Palestinian novels have, individually, been the subject of considerable evaluation over the years. Nevertheless, very little work of a comparative nature has been carried out on the three literatures. A comparative study would provide a useful insight into the artistic articulation of the respective conflicts and the role of nationalism within those conflicts.

The place of nationalism in the respective societies is an extremely important one. The thesis looks at the phenomenon of reactive nationalism - as opposed to top-down 'elite' nationalism - in a selection of Irish, Israeli and Palestinian novels. Conclusions are reached as to the representation of reactive nationalism in the novels. The method followed is a comparative one, framed by an overview of nationalist theory, literary and cultural studies and involving close reading.

Nationalism is considered under various tropes: land, the image of the enemy, love and war, religion and language. Land is seen as fundamental to both conflicts. The image of the enemy is seen to mutate, over time. Love and war are considered as existing in a symbiotic, if asymmetric, relationship. The contrasting weighting of religion, in both conflicts, is reflected in the selected novels. Finally, the nationalist trope of language is considered, particularly in the light of the phenomenon of the revival of Hebrew, before the foundation of the State of Israel.

Reactive nationalism is shown, by virtue of its pragmatic nature, to be a less than useful tool for long – term projects such as state – building and language revival. Language is considered, in the end, as a territorializing factor at least as formidable as land tenure. The cultural survival of both the Israeli and Palestinian *ethnies* is seen to be reflected in the linguistic and literary hegemony of the novels drawn from their societies.

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Slouching Towards Jerusalem

Reactive Nationalism in the Irish, Israeli and Palestinian Novel, 1985-2005

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Thesis Submitted in Fulfilment of the Requirement of the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

The Irish, Israeli and Palestinian novels have, individually, been the subject of considerable evaluation over the years. Nevertheless, very little work of a comparative nature has been carried out on the three literatures. A comparative study would provide a useful insight into the artistic articulation of the respective conflicts and the role of nationalism within those conflicts.

Given the particular complexity of the Irish and Israeli – Palestinian situations, the place of nationalism in the respective societies is an extremely important one. Nevertheless, it is the 'top – down' nationalism of the elites rather than the more pragmatic reactive nationalism which tends to be highlighted in both situations. The thesis looks at the phenomenon of reactive nationalism in a selection of Irish, Israeli and Palestinian novels. Conclusions are reached as to the representation of reactive nationalism in the novels. The method followed is a comparative one, framed by an overview of nationalist theory, literary and cultural studies and involving close reading.

Nationalism is considered under various tropes: land, the image of the enemy, love and war, religion and language. Land is seen as fundamental to both conflicts. The image of the enemy is seen to mutate, over time. Love and war are considered as existing in a symbiotic, if asymmetric, relationship. The contrasting weighting of religion, in both conflicts, is reflected in the selected novels. Finally, the nationalist trope of language is considered, particularly in the light of the phenomenon of the revival of Hebrew, before the foundation of the State of Israel.

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Note on Translation

Where published translations, in Irish, Arabic or Hebrew are used, these are accredited accordingly. All remaining translations, from Irish, Arabic or Hebrew, are by the researcher.

Note on Arabic Transliteration

The transliteration style used here is that of the International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies - i.e. a modified Encyclopaedia of Islam system where:

qaf = *q*

jim = *j*

There is no underlining of Roman double-letter equivalents

l of the definite article, *al-*, is not assimilated to the following consonant

ta marbuta is rendered as *a*, not *ah*

nisba is rendered as *–iyya*

ya followed by *ta marbuta* is rendered as *–iyya*

In cases where published translations follow a simpler transliteration scheme, or where accepted popular transliterations exist (e.g., fedayeen for *fidā'iyūn*-فدائيون), these will be accepted as valid.

The term 'War of 1948' has, for the most part, been used as a neutral term to cover both the Arabic term *al-Nakba* ('the disaster') and the Hebrew *milchemet ha-shichrur* ('war of independence').

Acknowledgements

This thesis represents the culmination of thirty years of engagement, from a personal, academic and literary perspective, with both the Irish and Israeli/Palestinian situations. From the personal perspective, it marks elements along a timeline which involved witnessing, among other events, the bombing and burning of the British embassy in Dublin, in February 1972, on the heels of Bloody Sunday in Derry, and the first Israeli invasion of Lebanon (Operation Litani), in March 1978. From the literary perspective, this involves a long - standing interest in Israeli and Palestinian literature. The academic jumping-off point for the thesis, was my MPhil thesis on the origins of the Israeli and Palestinian novel, at Manchester University.

The focal point of the thesis – the concept of reactive nationalism - was proposed by my supervisor, Dr Ayman el-Desouky (Modern Arabic and Comparative Literature, SOAS), in the light of my general interest in nationalism and literature. I am very grateful to him for pointing me towards this fruitful line of research. Professor Colin Shindler (Israeli Studies, SOAS), my second supervisor, has given solid guidance in terms of a scholarly approach to the materials.

During the course of this project, I spent quite an amount of time in the Galilean Druze village of Pekiin / al-Buqea, in particular, September-December 2007. During this extended period – when I witnessed the 'Druze Intifada' of October 30th, 2007, the script for which could have been written as a confirmation of the core concepts of this thesis - and on earlier visits, I was greatly helped by the Druze Arabic teacher Salman Amer, who became a good friend over a period of four years. I am also grateful to Salman Amer's family and friends who made my stay in the Druze village a rewarding and memorable one.

I would like to thank the Israeli writers Aharon Megged (Tel Aviv), his son, Eyyal Megged (Jerusalem) and AB Yehoshua (Haifa) for their time and advice. I would also like to thank the Palestinian writers Mahmud Shukair (Jerusalem) and Muhammad Ali Taha (Kabul, Western Galilee) for their time and advice, along with the Druze writer and scholar, Naim Araidi (Maghar, Western Galilee).

An earlier version of Chapter 2 was published under the title 'La Siesta del Hidalgo', in *Ireland and the Middle East* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press. 2007).

I would like to thank my sister, Dr Annette Schiller, for her advice and help over the past three years. Finally, I would like to thank my children, Brian, Miriam and Róisín for their patience and understanding, particularly during my absences in London and the Middle East.

The thesis is dedicated to the memory of the late Eamonn Smullen, formerly IRA member, Official Sinn Fein member, member of the Communist Party of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and, latterly, member of the Workers Party of Ireland with whom I had many illuminating conversations on what was, ultimately, to become the focus of this thesis. *Ar Dheis Dė go Raibh a Anam Dílis*.

Well, I came to the conclusion that there was no point in fighting a war you can't win... The rest was fairly straightforward after that.

Eamonn Smullen (d. 1990),
I.R.A. member, Communist Party of Great Britain and Ireland, The Workers' Party

Introduction

Mise Eire, is sine mé ná an Chailleach Bhéarra,
Mór mo ghlóir: mé a rug Cúchulainn cróga
Mór mo náire: mo chlann féin a dhíol a máthair
I am Eire, older am I, than the Hag of Beare,
Great is my glory: I gave birth to brave Cuchulainn
Great is my shame: my own family that sold its mother
Padraig Pearse (Irish Nationalist leader)

We shall never forsake the blue skies of Ulster for the grey skies of an Irish republic.
(Northern Irish Loyalist Wall Slogan)

שנית מצדה לא תיפול
Massada will not fall a second time

يلعن البابور الي جابك

Cursed be the ship that brought you. (Palestinian saying)

A British cartoon, of the mid-nineteenth century, aimed at the more truculent aspects of Irish nationalism, shows a shipwrecked Irishman arriving on a desert island. He drags himself ashore and, in pitch perfect Hiberno-English, questions two puzzled natives who, of course, have bones through their noses and are carrying spears:

-Is there a government here for if there is, and I'm agin' it!

It is the sort of caricature which sits well with the general demonisation of the Home Rule movement in 19th century Britain and involves a certain colonial *hauteur*

with respect to subject peoples while, inter alia, displaying a fetish for what has been termed 'simianizing the Irish Celt' (Perry 1971: 29). Reflecting the failure of the British elites to take the sullen force of nationalist sentiment in Ireland seriously, the caricature also points up, albeit unintentionally, the essentially *reactive* nature of a type of nationalism unmediated by Gellnerian top-down rhetoric. It is this *reactive nationalism* and its expression in the Irish, Israeli and Palestinian novel which will form the focus of this discussion.

The needs of nationalism are many and varied and the continuum stretches from simple irredentism to the frontiers of religious fundamentalism. The demand for name, the lust for land lost, the memory of perceived greatness and the cruel charm of dignity undone all serve to heighten the sense of otherness and alienation essential to all nationalist sentiment. There are at least as many nationalisms, we might say, as there are nations. Nor is there any shortage of theories of nationalism.

Both the definition of the nation and the nature of nationalism itself are open to debate. Some view the nation as a primordial entity built around civic ties (Geertz 1994). Others see modernity itself as the forcing-house of both nationalism and the nation state itself (Breuilly 1992). In the case of Anderson, the emergence of print-capitalism and the demise of elite languages are intimately bound up with the emergence of nationalism (Anderson 1991). The synthetic notion of national culture is highlighted by Hobsbawm who notes the conscious 'createdness', so to speak, of much of what passes for culture (Hobsbawm 1983). Gellner's view of the emergence of nationalism and the nation-state is a Eurocentric one, fundamentally determinist in that it posits push-and-pull factors in the creation of modern societies with nationalist tendencies (Gellner 1983). Kedourie's tying of the Kantian free will imperative with

the works of Fichte and Herder further consolidates a view of modern nationalist thought as subtending the circle of Middle-European thought (Kedourie 1960).

While such attempts to abstract general principles have borne some fruit, they sometimes sit uneasily with the facts–on–the-ground of grassroots nationalist agitation. This is all the more so in the case of reactive nationalism, as opposed to pro-active nationalism. While pro-active nationalism tends to follow a more modernising and middle-class discourse, reactive nationalism is a far more protean and unpredictable element. Put simply, the spoor of reactive nationalism is best viewed in the rear-view mirror.

The unmediated nature of reactive nationalism is one of the problems facing the critic of nationalism, in both theory and practice. It resists academic discourse in that it follows no grand Gellnerian schema nor, even with hindsight, is endowed with the sort of internal logic visible in the Fichte-Herder school of linguistic nationalism. It is fundamentally experiential and, consequently, is best represented in both oral narratives and memoirs although, as will be seen, the novel has an important role to play in the integration of reactive nationalism into national memory. Reactive nationalism, by and large, tends to be the prerogative of the lower social classes. This has ramifications for its representation in art forms which are essentially middle–class in form and function.

Reactive nationalism is often pigeonholed under the sobriquet of 'violent nationalist agitation' and this, in turn, adds yet another limitation to the discourse on the subject. It is often seen as a simplistic and wrongheaded reaction to threat. Partisan accounts of the plantations of Ireland in the sixteenth century, from both planters and natives, understandably point up violent encounters between both.

> In the Midlands and parts of Leinster the commencement of plantations, with the introduction of English and Welsh colonists

> in Laois and Offaly, only encouraged this trend, making legitimate targets of the new tenant farmers, artisans, and their families who arrived to occupy the forfeited lands of the O'Mores, O'Connors, and other local septs. Even so, initially at least, it is possible that a distinction may have been drawn between men on the one hand, and women and children on the other. While one observer, Bishop Bale of Ossory, later stated that several of his English tenants were deliberately slaughtered by local Gaelic and Anglo-Irish forces in 1553 when out working in a hayfield, he also recorded that an English woman driven out of Laois by the O'Mores was stripped but left alive. Eventually, however, women and children appear to have become targets too (Edwards, Lenihan & Tait 2008: 71).

This, of course, is not the whole story, either in 16th century southern Ireland or in twentieth century Northern Ireland or Israel/Palestine. More nuanced understandings of reactive nationalism have begun to emerge which acknowledge the multi-faceted nature of reactive nationalism.

> Reactive nationalism also manifests itself through radical wordings and behaviours against the targeted state; but its nature is different from assertive nationalism in that it is responsive rather than initiating. It is usually manifested in protests against a perceived injustice. It is also usually a release of emotions that have fermented for a considerable time, in response to a collective experience or sentiment with the feeling of being discriminated against, mistreated, 'shame imposed' or hurt. One characteristic of reactive nationalism is that the greater the outside pressure (or external stimulus), the firmer or fiercer is the response (Chan & Bridges 2006: 131).

Consequently, reactive nationalism must be viewed in a more considered way than simply considering it as a violent offshoot of irredentism or anti-settler agitation. The coherence of reactive nationalism lies in the collectivity of the experience, its emotional rather than intellectual import and in the near immediacy of response to threat. By virtue of the fact that it is a nationalism of collective narrative, memoir, oral history and, ultimately, the novel, are well suited to expressing its discontents and contradictions.

Over the years, this writer has encountered many expressions of grassroots reactive nationalism. After the killings by the British Army, of thirteen civilians, on Bloody Sunday, 1972, in Derry, I witnessed a crowd in Dublin petrol bomb the British Embassy and, finally, blow the door down with gelignite and sack the building. The action was a popular expression of outrage against a symbolic target and the Southern Irish government, in its wisdom, allowed the crowd to have its head so as not to risk deaths on the streets of Dublin and an island-wide conflagration. In the early years of the first intifada, stuck in a riot between Palestinian *shabab* and Israeli border police, on the Mount of Olives, I noticed how the formula followed the Northern Irish one: snatch squads, rocks, baton charges and tear gas. This was an everyday occurrence in the first intifada and hinted at the emergence of a generation which had lost its fear, after the inglorious defeat of 1967 and the incubation of resentment against the occupation of the West Bank.

More recently, on the night of October 30th, 2007, while on field work, I witnessed the violent night of disturbances in the predominantly Israeli Druze town of Pekiin/al-Buqea, in the Western Galilee. Israeli police – many of them Druze – had arrived in the early hours of the morning to arrest a group of young men thought to be responsible for burning down a couple of mobile phone antennas, a short while earlier. The resulting chaos was a *tableau vivant* of reactive nationalist rage, even though that rage was, strictly speaking, expressed between citizens of the same state. The *shabab* (young men) lay in wait for the police and ambushed them in the casbah-like confines of the town square. This resulted in injuries - including gunshot wounds - on both sides and the kidnapping of an Israeli policewoman who was only released when the captured *shabab* were. All the subsets of reactive nationalism were present too: land (threat to territory), religion (Druze youth against the mainly Jewish forces

of the Jewish state), violence (more than fifty were hospitalised), language (the Druze youth were fluent in Arabic and Hebrew; many of the police could only work in their own state language – Hebrew). The image of the enemy, a fundamental concept in all nationalist discourse, was shown to be fluid too: the Druze, long considered stalwarts of the Israeli security forces, now became suspect to many. During the disturbances at least one Jewish house in the town was gutted. In the Yeatsian dictum, all was changed, changed utterly. Not for the first time, the *table d'hote* of salon nationalism of the elites had been trumped by the *a la carte* of reactive nationalism of the masses.

Manifestations of reactive nationalism in art are relatively thin on the ground. Salon nationalism, the trickle-down, ideology-driven nationalism of the elites, however, gets a fairer outing in writers as diverse as Joyce, Conrad and Proust (Lewis 2000). In this respect, the conflation of 'the national project' with the development of the novel, in the 19th and 20th centuries, parallels the growth in European nationalism. 'With the rise of the novel, came a shift in the literary idea of nationhood...it is the idea of the cultural nation, not the political nation that inspires cultural nationalism and popular independence movements' (Parrinder 2006: 17). Language, literature and life are all intertwined within the many-chambered mansion of the novel. In as much, of course, as 'the national project' tended to be that of the elites, the novel reflected these concerns.

Joyce's *Ulysses* presents a palimpsest *par excellence* of nationalist angst, both reactive and proactive, in a time of societal change. Set before the first eclipse of the British Empire and World War One, it details an Ireland in the throes of detaching itself from the mothership of empire. Nationalist concerns – from Irish irredentism to

Jewish colonial immigration to Palestine – all get an airing. Nevertheless, the nationalism on display in *Ulysses* is, by and large, the nationalism of the emergent Catholic lower middle-class elites, of which Joyce himself was a member. In as much as Sinn Féin was to co-opt the more profound cultural impetus of the language revival movement a short while later, the socialist concerns of a minority of nationalist agitators would also be subsumed into the Juggernaut of separatist discourse.

The nationalism at stake in Ulysses then, is the working out of the dignity undone of the emergent Catholic lower middle-classes in, for the most part, the South of Ireland and follows an arc along which we find the 19th century movements of Catholic Emancipation and the Home Rule. While this nationalism finds a welcome in the rural fastnesses, it is, by and large, predicated on the nationalist rhetoric 'uploaded' by urbanised middle-class men and women working within the general framework of European nationalist sentiment. The inchoate rage of reactive nationalism – in both the Palestinian and Northern Irish cases, many decades later - is not at issue here. A middle-class Belfast Joyce of the 1970's would have been as out of depth depicting the essentially working-class, cross community conflict in the streets of that city as Joyce himself was in *imagining* the outworking of nationalist sentiment in an early twentieth century Irish village. Gellner's wry aside is worth noting here:

> I am deeply sensitive to the spell of nationalism. I can play about thirty Bohemian folk songs ... on my mouth-organ. My oldest friend, who is Czech and a patriot, cannot bear to hear me play them because he says I do it in such a schmalzy way, 'crying into the mouth organ'. I do not think I could have written the book on nationalism which I did write, were I not capable of crying, with the help of a little alcohol, over folk songs, which happen to be my favourite form of music (Dannreuther & Kennedy 2007: 339)

When Gellner wryly notes himself emoting at the playing of a Bohemian melody, he is averring, not to *salon nationalism* (i.e., the nationalism of the elites) but to the almost inscrutable phenomenon of *reactive nationalism* at the visceral level. *Finlandia* carries this mating of music and emotion to a more complex level. The opening measures, carried by the brass and woodwind, are threatening in tone and texture and signal the Finnish reaction to Russian hegemony and the extinguishing of Finnish independence in 1899. This owes nothing to program nationalism as such. It is predicated, rather, on a response to threat, pure and simple – the threat of annexation. *Finlandia*, as with the *Karelia Suite*, is an expression of gut level reactive nationalist discontent at the threat of an intruder. Wordless, its momentum sweeps us up in a maelstrom of fervour, even if we know little about Finnish geography and care less about the minutiae of Russo-Finnish discontents. It is an earnest that reactive nationalism, although it may be visceral, pragmatic, protean, dynamic and popular, is not necessarily vacuous or, for that matter, violent, in its outworking.

The Irish composer Seán Ó'Riada, working in the late fifties and early sixties, composed *Mise Éire*, as an orchestral paean to the triumph of the independence struggle in Ireland. Ó'Riada, in keeping with many of his continental cousins, turned to folk music for inspiration, in particular the *sean nós* tradition of Gaelic singing. There is more than a musical difference between *Finlandia* and *Mise Éire*, however, for Ó'Riada is writing after the fact of conflict while Sibelius is writing in reaction to the conflict and is, if at a remove, almost contemporary party to the conflict.

By way of contrast, Goya's *Executions of the 3rd of May 1808* depicts the intrusion of French forces into the Spanish consciousness, in the Peninsular War. Although painted a number of years after the French expedition, when the

Napoleonic intruder had retired, it is an altogether sympathetic portrayal of the Spanish side of things. Although we may choose to see the piece as a representation of the horrors of war as a whole, it is clearly complicit in presenting a demonised picture of the enemy. That is to say, it is reacting, at an artistic level, to the same trope of intrusion noted in the *Finlandia*. Seán Keating's contemporary paintings of the Irish War of Independence, on the other hand, are more socio-realist, almost Soviet, in fact, in their tone. The painting *Men of the South* (1921), with its flesh-coloured tones, depicts a group of IRA men ready to attack a British military patrol. It is less a reaction to outside threat than a warts-and-all portrayal of the rude realities of war and a retrospective one, rather than a contemporaneous reactive one. .

Popular song may reflect the core sentiments of reactive nationalism too. This, of course, says much about the fact that reactive nationalism is, by and large, a popular phenomenon. A German children's song of the First World War extols the virtues of the Zeppelin in quenching British hopes of victory.

Zeppelin, flieg
Hilf uns in Krieg
Flieg nach England
England wird abgebrant
Zeppelin, flieg

In1970's Belfast, many of the nationalist songs had a sectarian tinge to them.

Tiger's Bay was crowded
The Prods began to roar
Fifty thousand Orangemen sang
The Sash My Father Wore
But pretty soon their tune was changed
To Kevin Barry's song
When the New Lodge Road came over
And it didn't take them long
Shooting all the peelers, shootin' all the Huns
Shooting all the Orangemen
And hanging all their sons
And now the war is over
And the IRA have won
There's Fenians in the government
And Paisley's on the run

What is common to all of these representations is the reactive element. However we may construe them in long focus, they represent, like Gellner's Bohemian songs, a visceral reaction – though not a witless one – to outside threat or the Golden Age romance of remembered greatness.

It is the *reactive* nature of the novel itself which makes it a fitting vessel for the reflection of the more experiential elements of nationalist conflict. As the novel has moved closer, in the closing years of the twentieth century, to a greater engagement with life at a variety of social levels, so the postmodernist take on structure has provided a broader palette for the recasting of experience within the novel. It is this combination, therefore, of both artifice and experience which makes the novel a particularly suitable source for the reinterpretation of nationalist history. What memoirs and oral narratives lack in artistic artifice, the novel makes up for in both artifice and the individual engagement of the author with both materiel and narrative techniques. In short, the truth is never enough in storytelling, however dramatic the (nationalist) story. The story's impact is as much in the telling as in the tale itself. The intrinsic complexity of the novel, therefore, according to Walter Benjamin, is what lends it real authority in representing life and living.

> To write a novel means to carry the incommensurable to extremes in the representation of human life. In the midst of life's fullness, and through the representation of this fullness, the novel gives evidence of the profound perplexity of the living (Babha 2006: 311)

This reality, nevertheless, is to be counterbalanced, of course, with the essential unreliability of the novelist. The novelist, thankfully, is rarely to be relied upon and is as likely to cut off the hand that feeds him as he is to kiss it. From the nationalist perspective, while the writer may be a standard-bearer in the fight for

independence, unification or separation, he is as likely to turn against the newly independent state as not. In the Irish context, we can cite Sean O'Faolain and Brendan Behan, among others. In the Israeli context, we might look at S. Yizhar, Sami Michael and David Grossman. In the Palestinian arena, we could consider Sahar Khalifeh and Emil Habibi. The phenomenon of the faithless post-independence scribe will be seen to provide a crucial counterbalance to the studied certainties that fidelity to the 'national project' demands, in the pre-independence stage.

The 'democratisation' of the novel form also stands it in good stead in terms of representing the mundane realities of reactive nationalism. The once middle-class narrative of the novel, as envisioned by Galsworthy and James and Gaskill, has morphed, in the late twentieth century, into something that has become more and more concerned with lived rather then reflected experience, at all social levels. As with theatre, film and t.v. drama, this has meant that experience hitherto neglected or recast as vicarious experience, has now come to the fore. For this reason, the experiential nature of reactive nationalism is more likely to be represented in more recent manifestations of the novel. Ilyas Khouri's novel *Gate of the Sun* (Khouri 2005), based on multiple interviews with Palestinian refugees, is one such novel: it refracts experience, recasting it in the flexible format of the novel. Its rambling, discursive narrative is the stuff of trauma re-told. Equally, the borderland demotic Hiberno-English within the fractured narrative in Pat McCabe's *Breakfast on Pluto* (McCabe 1998) mirrors the patois of its rural lower-class protagonists. Chaim Sabatto's *Adjusting Sights* (Sabatto 1999) too, with its reimagining of the Yom Kippur War, is infused with language and lore redolent of the lived experience of its observant Jewish author.

The choice of the Irish, Israeli and Palestinian novels for this comparative study is not an arbitrary one. Some studies have sought, under the rubric of post – colonialism, to suggest a seamless parallel between both the Irish/British situation and the Israeli/Palestinian one (Cleary 2002.) Such parallels as do exist – and there are certainly quite a few – do not bespeak analogous situations. Nevertheless, political disputes involving land, dispossession, violent affray, nationalist agitation and so on, must all, at some level, share certain similarities. The overlaps in the two situations include issues of contemporaneousness, political orientation and such mundane matters as population size and territorial size and so forth.

There is also another important issue which will show up in the discussion: the contrasting nature of the nationalisms represented in the various traditions. Although it can be argued that all nationalism ultimately, is reactive, this is to miss the point. Southern Irish nationalism, pre-1916, is a mirror image of common or garden European top-down nationalism; the nationalism of Republican and Loyalist elements, in the 'thirty year war' in Northern Ireland, is clearly reactive in nature. In the Israeli-Palestinian case, while some authorities decry the notion that Palestinian nationalism is a response to Israeli nationalism, the facts speak otherwise. Although the de-Ottomanisation of Syria-Palestine provided a clear backdrop to the development of Palestinian nationalism (Muslih, 1988), it was the localised reaction of the Palestinian Arab population to British occupation and the encroachment of Jewish settlements – i.e., a reactive nationalist reaction – that was the catalyst for the formation of Palestinian nationalism. The 'clearances' in 1948, from the new Israeli state, give form and irredentist direction to the new nationalism. This study will point up the contrasting traditions of nationalism in both situations.

The choice of time-frame (1985-2005) is an important one too. This period, in the development of the novel, represents a broadening out of the novel's social and political concerns, a feature highlighted by the production of novels which address post-colonial and societal issues in those societies. This period too, reflects a certain 'maturation' in both conflicts under scrutiny. In as much as the first significant Jewish immigration to Palestine, in the Zionist narrative, started in the early 1880's, the Home Rule movement in Ireland took root in the same decade. Equally, the pivotal year of 1972 marks a highpoint in the conflict in both situations. Although 1967 is a watershed in terms of the Arab - Israeli conflict, it is 1972, as the year of the Munich Olympics massacre and of the Bloody Sunday killings in Derry, which internationalises the reality of low intensity conflict, in both situations. It is the year when two relatively localised conflicts burst onto the stage, fully formed. With the inevitable time-lag which seems part-and-parcel of the prose writer's reaction to local or world events, it is not unusual that a period of at least ten to twenty years elapses before a novelist, or his society, can assimilate major changes. Even with a writer as prolific and contemporaneous as the Palestinian Ghassan Kanafani – whose life was cut short at the relatively early age of thirty six – we see this time-lag in assimilating the trauma of the War of 1948.

The first chapter of the thesis seeks to situate the concept of reactive nationalism within the purview of theories and history of nationalism. A discussion of the main theories and theorists of nationalism will frame the more experiential elements of reactive nationalism. Irish, Israeli and Palestinian nationalist and critical discourses will be considered in an attempt to show that these localised discourses reveal the experiential and historical dimensions of reactive nationalism. The

representation of reactive nationalism will be paralleled with the representation of reactive nationalism in the three literatures. I hope to suggest, by doing so, that while *reactive nationalism*, as a concept, is relatively new, its presence both in the *tableau vivant* of the Irish and Israeli-Palestinian conflicts is vivid, as is its representation in the respective literatures.

Chapter two examines the trope of Land, as a sub-set of nationalist discourse. The following novels will be considered here: Pat McCabe's *Breakfast on Pluto* (1998), which deals with the issue of borderlands; A.B. Yehoshua's *The Liberated Bride* (Yehoshua, 2001), which glosses the situation of Palestinians within Israel; Yahyia Yakhlif's *A Lake Beyond the Wind* (2001), a narrative take on land lost during the War of 1948; Said Kashua's *Dancing Arabs* (2002), a *Bildungsroman* which deals with a young Palestinian growing up in Israel and the territorialising features of language and religion; Glenn Patterson's Belfast novel *That Which Was* (Patterson, 2005), which deals with the political backwash of thirty years of conflict in Northern Ireland, 'after the war is over'. All five novels, in one way or another, concern themselves with the issue of territory, territoriality and dispossession. The discussion in this chapter will hinge on the centrality of land, in both conflicts, and the representation of the trope of land in the selected novels. The discussion will note that land is a constant in both conflicts and that territoriality is a crucial feature in any discussion of the various nationalisms involved.

Chapter three looks at the image of the enemy, over time, and seeks to contrast the changing image of the enemy in both situations. The fact that the image of the enemy, in the novels and in nationalist discourse, is scarcely static, is a fact which will be pointed up. The novels contrasted include: Seamus Deane's *Reading in the Dark* (1997), the coming-of-age story of a Northern Irish Catholic boy and the

realisation that there might be more than one enemy lurking in the undergrowth; Eskhol Nevo's *Homesick* (2000), an Israeli novel that deals with the nightmare of the Palestinian enemy returning home, in the form of a day labourer; Sahar Khalifeh's *The Inheritance*(1997), which, while acknowledging the existence of the Israeli enemy 'in the living-room', points up the corruption and duplicity within the Palestinian Authority area. The image of the enemy is shown to be fluid, in these novels. In as much as reactive nationalism is a reaction to real or perceived threats, the image of the enemy too is seen to be reactive to changes in the conflict.

Chapter four considers the tropes of love and war in the selected novels. Edna O'Brien's *The House of Splendid Isolation* (1995) treats of a love affair between a Southern Irish 'landed' lady and a Northern Irish Republican gunman. Love mingles with war too, in Eli Amir's *Yasmin* (2005), an Israeli novel which sets the relationship between a young Israeli of Sephardic origin and three women against the aftermath of the Six Day War. Ilyas Khoury's *Gate of the Sun* (Khoury 2005) examines the fraught relationship between one of the fedayeen and a Palestinian woman in the North of Israel. In all cases, war is, quite literally, seen to call the shots over love. As the discourse of reactive nationalism tends, in the popular imagination, to be tied in with violence, the chapter will make the point too, that the violence, in both situations, is varied and fluid and not necessarily random. Inferences will be drawn as to the contrasting nature of violence in both situations and its representation.

Chapter five deals with the importance – or otherwise – of religion in the two conflicts and how this is portrayed in the novels. Eoin McNamee's novel of the Shankill Butchers, *Resurrection Man* (1994), looks at the sectarianism at the heart of the conflict in working-class Belfast. Chaim Sabatto's novel, Adjusting Sights

(1999), set against the backdrop of the Yom Kippur War, reflects the centrality of religious belief in the world-view of a young Israeli solder of orthodox background. *Jabal Nebu* (1995), the late Izzat Ghazzawi's novel, while far from being an apolitical novel, is invested with a *longue durée* image of popular Islam among refugee Palestinians, on the 'far side' of the Jordan. Acknowledging that the western paradigm of diminishing religiosity with upward mobility is not necessarily valid in the Middle East, the chapter will seek to examine the representation of religion in the respective novels and come to conclusions as to the nature of this representation.

Chapter six looks at the importance of language, from both an ideological and pragmatic point of view, in both conflicts. It contrasts the centrality of language, in the Israeli case, with the ephemerality of language revival in the Irish case, and posits the notion that Zionism had effectively created a 'country' before the foundation of the State of Israel, by virtue of the fact that a Hebrew-speaking entity was in existence by the end of World War 1. Novels considered include the Irish (Gaelic) *Sna Fir* (1999), by Micheal O'Conghaile, *Exile* (1910), by Padraig O'Conaire, the veteran Israeli writer Aharon Megged's Foiglman (Megged 2003), a barbed meditation on the Hebrew-Yiddish *contretemps* and the Palestinian writer Muhammad Ali Taha's *Sirat Bni Balut* (2004). All of the novels exhibit, in one way or another, a certain territorialising aspect of language, in its native environment. The relative success and failure of both the Hebrew and Gaelic revival movements and the place of both in the respective nationalist traditions is also noted. The importance of the Arabic language for the survival and sustenance of Palestinian life and literature is underscored as well.

In the conclusion, I will seek to sum up the similarities and contrasts in the representation of the five reactive nationalist tropes discussed: language, the image

of the enemy, war, religion and language and try to draw inferences from their representation in the respective novels.

Chapter 1

Nationalism and Reactive Nationalism

Notions of Nation and Nationalism

> Nationalism as a collective emotional force in our culture, makes its first appearance, with explosive impact, in the Hebrew Bible. And nationalism, at this stage, is altogether indistinguishable from religion: the two are one and the same thing. God chose a particular people and promised them a particular land (O'Brien, 1988: 3).

Definitions of nation and nationalism, not to mention definitive accounts of the rise of nationalism, are complex and contradictory. The concept of people/nation (עם), defined land ,(ארץ) other nations (הגוים) and election (בחר) are all central elements in such ancient narratives as those of the Hebrew Scriptures (Speiser 1960: 163). Nevertheless, as with 'retrospective' nationalisms which utilise Golden Age, *Insula Sacra* and Election concepts, nationalist accounts of the past must be treated with circumspection and scepticism. Nationalism likes its narratives neat and it is not surprising that the claims of nationalists, at all levels, are subservient to the goals of nationalism. That is to say, we cannot discuss the theory of nationalism outside the hothouse of nationalist activity itself.

Smith looks at nationalism under four rubrics: Modernism, Perennialism, Primordialism and Ethno-Symbolism (Smith, 2001). The Modernist paradigm views the development of nationalism as tied in with the modernising effects of industrialisation. The Perennialist argument, on the other hand, speaks to a view of the nation as an entity emerging and re-emerging over time. The primordialist view

sees the nation as a timeless entity whose existence pre-dates statehood. 'Primordialists appeal to emotional and instinctive constraints as ultimate explanations for national mobilisation. They typically date the origin of nationhood back to remote epochs, treating them as emotional givens' (Conversi 2006:15). The Ethno-Symbolist perspective, largely championed by Smith himself, places an emphasis on the early pre-history of the nation (Smith 1995:3). Smith's working definitions of 'nationalism' and 'nation' are worth citing in this regard.

> By 'nationalism' I shall mean an ideological movement for the attainment and maintenance of autonomy, unity and identity of a human population, some of whose members conceive it to constitute an actual or potential 'nation'. A 'nation', in turn, I shall define as a named human population sharing an historic territory, common myths and memories, a mass, public culture and common rights and duties for all members (Smith 1995: 2)

Discourses of Nationalism

The more prominent theoreticians and historians of nationalism will be seen, more or less, to subtend the various categories proposed above by Smith. Nevertheless, there is plenty of contention over the historical development of nationalism. One critic's evidence of uneven development, such as Nairn (Nairn 1994) may look much the same as another commentator's evidence of internal colonisation, such as that of Hechter (Hechter 1975). The evidence is, as often as not, refracted through the ideological looking-glasses of the observer.

Kedourie is firmly in the modernist/ instrumentalist camp and traces the development of nationalism back to Kantian speculations, through the more determinist notions of Fichte and Herder. Autonomy of will lies behind this aspect of Kantian philosophy (Kedourie 1960: 24). Although this account of the ideological origins of nationalism has been recycled elsewhere, other historians of nationalism, such as Gellner, fail to recognise in Kantian logic the wellspring of nationalist

ideology (Gellner 1983: 130). The translation of this individual will-to-good into a sense of fidelity to the state brings in Rousseau. 'Rousseau had also argued that neither individual nor state could attain happiness or virtue unless man exchanged a general will for his own selfish particular will, and willed the good of all, rather than his own' (Kedourie 1960: 40). Kedourie is a particularly harsh critic of nationalism, however, despising its millenarian otherworldliness (Kedourie 1960: 87). The sense that nationalism was 'over', flagged much earlier by E.H. Carr (Carr 1945), has been seen to prove premature in the extreme and not to take into account anti-colonial, separatist and even religious sensibilities. Kedourie's famous contention that 'the owl of Minerva flies out at dusk' and was circling nationalism has been wittily contested by Smith who suggests that the 'high noon' of nationalism rather than the dusk of nationalism was more at issue (Breuilly 2006).

Gellner, schooled in the middle-European intellectual tradition, takes leave of Kedourie on the purely instrumental nature of nationalism. Along with his criticism of Kedourie, he lists three more 'errors' which are common to theorists of nationalism: the notion that nationalism is natural, the Marxist 'wrong address' theory which suggests that the *Aufklarung* was intended for class consumption and not for nations, and the 'Dark Gods Theory', which suggests that nationalism is the working out of some dark, atavistic force (Gellner 1983: 129-130). Gellner's dictum that 'Nationalism is primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent' is just a little too thin for consumption, however (Gellner 1983: 1). According to Smith, Gellner ended up, towards the end of his career, concluding that 'Nations and nationalism were seen as necessary and functional for industrial modernity, just as the latter became necessarily nationalist'

(Smith 2001: 66). Nevertheless, Gellner insists that nationalism precedes nations, and not the other way round (Gellner 1983: 55).

Hobsbawm's concept of inventing and 'mass-producing' traditions makes a certain amount of sense, at the micro-level. He distinguishes between traditions and customs, investing the former with top-down self-consciousness (Hobsbawm 1983: 3). Invented traditions include the Ossian forgery and the semi-fictitious imaginings of past heroes such as Boadicea and Vercingetorix (Hobsbawm 1983: 7). This instrumentalist view of nationalism, however, leaves little room for the pragmatic outpouring of nationalist sentiment devoid of such programmatic schemes. While we can easily point, in the Irish case, for example, to such inventions of traditions in both the state and pre-state period, Hobsbawm's tightly-woven theory does not take account of such matters as agitation over land rights and religious rights. It is, in effect, a re-imagining of the Kedourian instrumentalist view of nationalism which is seriously deficient where less developed ethnies are concerned.

One of the earliest theoreticians of nationalism, Kohn, provides a very succinct definition of nationalism: 'Nationalism is first and foremost a state of mind, an act of consciousness, which since the French Revolution has become more and more common to mankind' (Kohn 2005: 10-11). While pointing up the difference between western and eastern nationalisms, Kohn traces 'Israel' and 'Hellas' as forerunners of democracy (Kohn 2005: 27). The concept of covenant is crucial here: 'The essential traits of nationalism originated with the ancient Jews: the idea of a chosen people, the consciousness of national history, and national Messianism...it was only through covenant that the Jews were constituted as a people' (Kohn 2005: 36). Kohn also underlines the novel democratic note here: the covenant is between God and the people, not the ruler.

Greenfeld divides the development of the idea of the nation into two areas: individualistic/libertarian and collectivistic-authoritarian (Greenfeld 1992: 11). She notes the importance of such documents as the vernacular translations of the Old Testament and Foxe's Book of Martyrs in galvanising group cohesion. The reactive nature of German nationalism in the 'wars of Liberation from Napoleonic domination in the early 19th century' is also highlighted (Greenfeld 1992: 277). Greenfeld concludes that 'By the time of the Armada, a sense of English nationhood had spread to the middle classes in most areas, and it provided the model for subsequent nationalisms in France, Germany, Russia and the United States' (Smith 2001: 97).

Montserrat Guibernau's definition of nationalism is both utilitarian and practical.

> In my view, nationalism is a sentiment that has to do with attachment to homeland, a common language, ideals, values and traditions, and also with the identification of a group with symbols (a flag, a particular song, piece of music or design) which define it as different from others. The attachment to all these signs creates an identity; and the appeal to that identity has had in the past, and still has today, the power to mobilize people (Guibernau 1996: 43).

Guibernau highlights the influence of the French and American revolutions in the development of nationalism and sees the importance of nationalism as lying in its ability to represent the will of the people (Guibernau 1996: 64). She is critical of Gellner's underplaying of the role of culture in the whole debate while pointing up the religious parallels with nationalism. 'Nationalism began to gain strength when religion was declining in Europe, and, in my view, Durkheim was fundamentally right in arguing that it is indeed a universal fact that, when a conviction of any strength is held by the same community of men, it inevitably takes on a religious character' (Guibernau 1996: 83). The British scholar Breuilly's comprehensive

overview of nationalist ideology weighs in on the side of the modernists: 'Nationalist ideology has its roots in intellectual responses to the modern problem of the relationship between state and society' (Breuilly 1993:70). Breuilly's taxonomy of nationalism includes unification nationalism and separation nationalism. In the Czech case, he argues for a transition from cultural to political nationalism. In considering the various approaches to nationalism, Breuilly lists: *nationalist, the communications approach, Marxist, psychological* and *functional.* The fundamental reactive nature of nationalist ideology and action is pointed up too: 'Nationalism is a parasitic movement and ideology, shaped by what it opposes.' (Breuilly 1993: 399).

Benedict Anderson's seminal work, *Imagined Communities* (Anderson 1991), introduced a few new paradigms to the debate on the nature and origins of nationalism. Anderson links the rise of 'print communities', the change in the nature of perceived time (the rise of 'simultaneity'), the elevation of vernacular translations of scripture and the decline of religion into a web of circumstance which gave rise to the nation. Anderson's imagined community is less imagined than visualised or even sensed, however. His notion of the nation is at once simple and subtle: 'In an anthropological spirit, then, I propose the following definition of the nation: it is an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign' (Anderson 1991: 6). Anderson speaks of conceptual shifts within humanity, where the notion of a sacred script, the centrality of 'high centres' in controlling life and a belief in temporality linked to cosmology, were all swept away (Anderson 1991: 36). The colonisation of the New World coupled with the rise of print capitalism (dependent on the rise of the printed vernacular and the Reformation) forced matters to a head (Anderson 1991: 39). As with Hutchinson (Hutchinson 1987), Anderson notes the centrality of the likes of writers, teachers,

pastors and lawyers in fomenting national consciousness through literary and linguistic endeavours (Anderson 1991: 74). Of South America, Anderson notes:

> What I am proposing is that neither economic interest, Liberalism, nor Enlightenment could or did, create in themselves, the kind, or shape, of imagined community to be defended from these regimes' depredations: to put it another way, none provided the framework of a new consciousness – the scarcely-seen periphery of its vision – as opposed to centre-field objects of its admiration or disgusts. In accomplishing this specific task, pilgrim creole functionaries and provincial creole printmen played the decisive historic role (Anderson 1991: 65).

Smith takes issue with some of Anderson's assertions, however, claiming that fealty to family and nation '...makes nations as much communities of emotion and will, as imagination and cognition' (Smith 2001: 80). Among the criticisms Özkirimli (Özkirimli 2000) logs against Anderson, on the other hand, are the charges that his account is 'culturally reductionist', that the connection between nationalism and religions is only true in some cases, that Anderson's examples of official nationalism are 'not correct' and that he misinterprets the rise of anti-colonialism (Özkirimli 2000: 152-155).

Llobera is firmly in the camp of the modernists, as the title of his study suggests – *The God of Modernity: The Development of Nationalism in Western Europe* (Llobera 1994). Nevertheless, he sees the roots of nationalism as lying in the Middle Ages. He subscribes, at one level to the Perennialist view of nationalism, which sees nations as emergent and re-emergent entities. He sees no causal connection, however, between capitalism and nationalism nor does he subscribe to Nairn's view of 'uneven development' (Nairn 1997). Billig's novel notion of 'banal nationalism' is worth noting here, in that it contrasts revolutionary / pre-state nationalism with the diurnal realities of state nationalism: '...the metonymic image

of banal nationalism is not a flag which is being consciously waved with fervent passion; it is the flag hanging unnoticed on a public building' (Billig 1995: 8).

Alter's typology of nationalism throws up an interesting shortlist: *Risorgimento Nationalism*, *Reform Nationalism* and *Integral Nationalism*. He cites Hroch's three phases in the development of nationalism: the first period, where culturally-minded individuals such as teachers, students etc. take up the cause; the second phase, the *Aufklarung,* phase, where the ideology of the culturally-minded elite trickles down through the social ranks; the third phase, where the movement becomes a popular one (Alter 1989: 56). The tie-in with 'cultural nostalgia' noted by Armstrong is also worth commenting on (Armstrong 1982: 51). This is something noted very specifically in the Basque case by Muro who concludes that 'What is clear is that all nationalist leaders use the past for present aims. Although no direct causal link relationship can be established between nostalgia and violence, there can be no doubt that the cult of the Golden Age offers enormous potential for political action'(Muro 2005: 586).

A number of overviews of nationalism are worth positioning in the debate: A.D. Smith's *Nationalism* (Smith 2001), Hearn's *Rethinking Nationalism: A Critical Introduction* (Hearn 2006), Özkirimli's *Theories of Nationalism: A Critical Introduction* (Özkirimli 2000). Smith's overview lays out the main paradigms of nationalism. A confirmed ethno-symbolist, his reading of nationalist ideology and history argues for the ancient roots of *ethnies* and the forging forces of the post-French Revolution period. He notes the blending of the ancient and the modern in nationalism. 'A good example of this was the intellectual and popular movement of the Gaelic revival in late nineteenth century Ireland, richly documented by John Hutchinson (1987: chs. 4-5); here, the traditions of the peasantry and Catholic lower

classes provided parameters and cultural materials for the revivalist formulations of the Irish intellectuals' (Smith 2001: 57). This emphasis on culture, as opposed to politics, in the ascendancy of nationalism, also finds favour with Leerssen, who suggest that 'All nationalism is cultural nationalism' (Leerssen, 2006: 559).

Hearn's definition of nationalism is pithy and to the point: 'Nationalism is the making of combined claims, on behalf of a population, to *identity*, to *jurisdiction* and to *territory*' (Hearn 2006: 11). He notes Grosby and Smith's emphasis on 'la longue durée', the concept of historical process. He points up Kohn's distinction between civic and ethnic nationalism, a distinction which tends to be made to underline the differences between Eastern and Western nationalisms (Hearn 2006: 88). Like Hutchinson, he notes the importance of the elites in the work of Smith and Hroch (Hearn 2006: 130). In an iconoclastic conclusion, he notes that the role of emotions in nationalism is not only important, but 'so far, under-theorized ' (Hearn 2006: 227).

Özkimirli provides a historical and critical overview of the development of nationalist thought, from Kant, through Michelet to Weber, Durkheim and Kohn to the present. He cites Hayes (Hayes 1955) divisions of nationalisms into: humanitarian, Jacobin, traditional, liberal nationalist, integral nationalist and economic nationalist (Özkimirli 2000: 38-49). He criticises over-dependence on theories of elite manipulation because they ignore the 'view from below' (Özkimirli 2000: 123). Özkimirli notes Snyder's chronology of nationalism: *Integrative Nationalism* (1815-1871) / *Disruptive Nationalism* (1971-1890) / *Aggressive Nationalism* (1900-1945) / *Contemporary Nationalism* (1945-) (Özkimirli 2000: 43-44). In pointing towards future investigations, he suggests the following way-points in the discussion: there can be no general theory of nationalism; there is no 'one' nationalism; what unites these forms of nationalism is the 'discourse of nationalism';

the nationalist discourse is only effective if it is reproduced on a daily basis (this brings in Billig's 'banal nationalism' concept); differences of ethnicity, gender, class or place in the life-cycle must all inform definitions and redefinitions of national identities (Özkimirli 2000: 226-232).

Irish Nationalism – An Overview

Irish nationalism is, in a word, (and using that word in the vulgar, popular sense), 'Irish': paradoxical, self-contradictory and guided by its own internal logic. (Boyce 1995: 375)

Dorothy Macardle, active in the War of Independence on the Republican side, member of Cumann na mBan, and contemporary historian of Irish nationalism, in her acclaimed *The Irish Republic* (Macardle 1937), writing of the origins of Irish resistance to British rule, opined that

> There was a sort of magnificence in the barbarities of Elizabeth's agents in Ireland, and in the language, eloquent as Macbeth's, in which her chroniclers record their deeds: devastations on a wide scale like that in Munster, where in six months of the year 1582 more than thirty thousand of the Irish were said to have been starved to death, and 'a most populous and plentiful country suddenly made void of man and beast' (Macardle 1937: 31)/

Although the hallmarks of the nationalist hagiographer are clear in Macardle's emotive account of the Irish fight for freedom, there is more than a grain of truth in the telling, just as there is in the equally partisan – and contemporary – extracts of the slaughter of English Protestant settlers in Ulster, during the 1641 Rebellion, cited by Bardon

> The massacre at Portadown is well authenticated; there Manus Roe O'Cahan drove about eighty men, women and children 'off the bridge into the water and then and there instantly and most barbarously drowned the most of them. And those that could not swim and came to the shore they knocked on the head, and so after

> drowned them, or else shot them to death in the water' (Bardon 1992: 138)

The point to be made is simple enough: both Catholic (natives) and Protestant (settlers), in particular in Northern Ireland, do have shared, if flawed, memories of real and quantifiable miseries done to their respective communities. The confessional clash, in Northern Ireland – historical Ulster – is heightened, of course, by the fact that confessional realities underscored dispossession, occupation and plantation. The majority of the settlers in Ulster were of Scottish ethnicity and Protestant religion (Bardon 1992: 127). Although the case has been well made by Akenson (Akenson 1992), in a comparative study of covenant and land in South Africa, Israel and Ulster, that religious sentiment buttressed colonial realities, the truth is, that had the settlers in Ulster – and the rest of Ireland, for that matter – been Buddhist, Muslim or Jain, the anti-settler *reactive nationalist* formula would have been much the same: natives v settlers + religion. It is a point well made by Boyce in his overview of nationalism in Ireland, at a later date.

> The mainstream of Irish nationalism, therefore, involved mounting an attack not only on England, the alleged originator of Ireland's ills, but on the Protestant minority in Ireland, who sheltered behind the British Protestant's skirts. This attack - from the time of O'Connell to that of Redmond - was not of course upon Protestants as such; it was upon Protestant power and privilege, on the Protestants' refusal to accept the inevitable fact that the Roman Catholics were the majority, the Irish people, and must eventually have their way in Ireland (Boyce 1995:382)

The 'facts-on-the-ground', to use the Israeli expression, of transfer of land tenure are narrated dispassionately and in detail, by Smyth, in *Map-Making, Landscapes and Memory: A Geography of Colonial and Early Modern Ireland c. 1530-1750* (Smyth 2006). Smyth's cogent analysis avoids the extreme interpretations of Loyalist and Republican commentators while cleaving to the centrality of

Anderson's map-making and conquest paradigm. The transfer of ownership, from Catholic to Protestant hands, between 1641 and 1703, is further outlined by Clarke (Clarke 2001: 164). The hallmarks of native identity, in the pre-dispossession phase therefore, were: land, language (Gaelic, for the most part) and religion (Catholicism, for the most part). The response to this dispossession, in the first generation, tended to be violent and immediate, a trope of *reactive nationalism* itself, as will be seen later. The rise of Catholicism as a badge of nationalist identity, as will be seen too, tended to be strengthened as the fortunes of the Gaelic language declined, particularly in the 19th century, in the post-Famine period. But the land issue never went away, as Garvin notes, when citing the memoirs of one Kathleen Keyes McDonnell, speaking of 'middle-class and farm society' in Bandon, Co. Cork, in the early twentieth century.

> It is essential to know the historic background of the Elizabethan settlement of Bandon in order to appreciate the impact of the Easter Rising of 1916 on an alien community (of Protestants), and so to understand why, after more than three centuries after the foundation of Bandon, the descendants of the settlers fled before Irish wrath or fell to rebel bullets (Garvin 2005: 112)

The point must be made again, that while 'settler' ideology, pace Akenson (Akenson 1992) was clearly present in some cases, particularly in East Ulster (counties Down and Antrim), where Scottish Calvinist settlers predominated, anti-Protestant sentiment per se (as opposed to anti-settler sentiment) had little to do with the finer shades of native agitation.

Hirst ties up the sectarian situation in working-class 19th century Belfast, with the realities of the rural Ulster communities Protestant and Catholic migrated from, in the early stages of the industrial revolution (Hirst 2002). Her main contention - that rural communities in Ulster imported their sectarian differences into an urban setting (Belfast) in the early 19th century, where they converted into political

differences - holds water. The Protestant reaction to the Repeal of the Act of Union (1800) and the Home Rule movement, was further exacerbated by sectarian differences, even if it was a case, as the proverb has it, of 'sixpence looking down on half-a-shilling', socio-economically speaking. The class rifts within Protestant Unionism itself are revealed in McKay's study of Ulster Protestants (McKay 2000).

> 'They hate us because they can no longer use us as a threat. I'm being honest. The DUP (Democratic Unionist Party) had no trouble sitting down with UVF (Ulster Volunteer Force) men when we were killing taigs (Catholics) and that is being blunt about it. The UUP had no problem organizing the Ulster Workers' Strike with us. When we stopped, the venom was really aimed at people like Davey (Ervine) and Hutchie (Billy Hutchinson), the ones who brokered the ceasefire, the ones providing the analysis. We've sheathed the sabre, and they can't rattle it any more.' (McKay 2000: 61)

The 1916 Rising and the partition of Ireland are the high watermarks of the nationalist/loyalist conflict in the early twentieth century. Cultural nationalism, in the form of the Gaelic League, was one recruiting agent for national sentiment but this movement was quickly hijacked by the IRB (Irish Republican Brotherhood) and tacked onto the physical force campaign (Garvin 2008: 188). Now that language, religion and ethnic identity had been hitched to the nationalist bandwagon, this only left the issue of land tenure to be commandeered. This was solved by the recruitment of tenant farmers to the cause. According to Boyce 'The solid core of Irish nationalism from the mid-nineteenth century onwards was the Irish tenant farmer, a conservative, yet tenaciously nationalist, class' (Boyce 1995: 379).

From this perspective, it would seem reasonable to posit a definite absence of ideological input in the pre-1916 cadres of the coming Rising. But such was not the case. A strong ideological basis combining the top-down European style nationalism of the elites with ground zero 'consciousness raising' by Sinn Féin was evident in the

South of Ireland (Caulfield 1995: 15). This combination of Golden Age rhetoric-topped off with separatist propaganda and the revived memories of real or imagined wrongs-provided fuel for the nationalist engine. Nevertheless, it was the British reaction in executing the leaders of the 1916 Rising – in the midst of the Great War, after all – rather than the military success, or lack of it, which provided the real fuel for the War of Independence which followed after the Rising. However, it must be pointed out here, that the revolutionary élite (to use Garvin's phrase) present in the pre- 1916 Irish Republican movement, has no equivalent in the Republican campaign in Northern Ireland, in the late twentieth century. There is, and was, no Northern Irish equivalent to the likes of Pearse (an educationalist), Connolly (an active socialist and ideologue) or MacDonagh (a political strategist and litterateur). Nor did the Northern Irish *'Aufstand'* have the cross-class support it had in the South of Ireland, in the early years of the twentieth century. This contrast, in the case of late twentieth century Northern Ireland, is pointed up in White's *Provisional Irish Republicans* which, analysing the occupations of 'Forty Five Irish Republicans Who Died on Republican Military Operations in Belfast, 1969-1972' finds that all except one was working-class and male with an average age of twenty one (White 1993: 85).

The Provisional IRA thirty year 'long war', while clearly related to the previous three hundred years in Ulster, cannot be detached from the issue of the campaign for expanded civil rights for Catholics, even if the Republican movement effectively hijacked the momentum of that campaign, at working class level, and manipulated it for its own means.

The Northern Irish MP, Bernadette Devlin's, contemporary account (Devlin 1969) of growing up as a member of the Catholic minority is replete with race memory bordering on sectarian bitterness.

> Cookstown, in North Tyrone, is a planter town, one of several built in the seventeenth century for the Scots Presbyterians who were imported into Ireland to keep the natives in order. The structure of Cookstown hasn't changed in the three hundred years of its existence. At one end is the Old Town, the original settlement, which is Protestant to this day. At the other, where the rebels once camped, now stands the Catholic area (Devlin 1969:11).

Devlin further recalls the fact that while some of her friends' 'daddies' were busy in the IRA, in the fifties, other children's fathers were members of the notorious 'B Specials', a type of Protestant Guardia Civil, formed to protect the majority against Catholic irredentism (Devlin 1969: 40. The connect – and ultimate disconnect – between the largely Catholic civil rights movement and the re-emergent nationalist campaign was quite visible in Derry (Ferriter 2005: 623).

The memoir of the southern Irish middle-class Catholic woman, Maria McGuire, who joined the serried ranks of the Provisional IRA in the early seventies and then defected, shows the North-South disconnect in the nationalist debate (McGuire 1973). McGuire's disenchantment with both the endemic anti-civilian violence of the Provisional IRA and the sectarian nature of that violence ultimately led to her romantic view of the situation coming to grief. The memoir stands, not so much as a personal testimony, as a reminder of the contrast between Northern Irish and Southern Irish nationalist traditions.

Other personalised accounts of the recent Northern Irish 'Troubles' vary widely, from the conspiratorial view (Geraghty 1998) to the more sanguine view of the 'historian' of the IRA, Bowyer Bell (Bowyer Bell 1990). The reality seems to lie somewhere in between. While local defence committees, set up to protect Catholic

interface areas, were clearly composed of elements which included nationalists, this was a more reactive affair than the proactive nationalist campaign of the Provisional IRA which took wings after the split with the Official IRA, in 1969. The nascent Provisional IRA insisted that their legitimacy was grounded in historical realities.

> We declare our allegiance to the 32- County Irish Republic proclaimed at Easter 1916, established by the first Dáil Éireann in 1919, overthrown by force of arms in 1922 and suppressed to this day by the existing British-imposed Six-County and 26-County partition states (Boywer Bell 1990: 366).

With one fell swoop, the 'new' IRA managed to delegitimise both southern and northern states while donning the mantle of legitimacy themselves.

Comprehensive accounts of the Provisional IRA campaign are plentiful. Some, like Bowyer Bell (Bowyer Bell 1990), situate the campaign within the century – long IRA/ IRB campaign. Others, like Toolis' *Rebel Hearts: Journey's Within the IRA's Soul* (Toolis 1995) and Tanner's *Ireland's Holy Wars* (Tanner 2001) take the longer historical settler-native realities into account, while avoiding propagandist positions. What is clear about most of these accounts is that they complement Hirst's (Hirst 2002) telling of the situation in 19th century working class Belfast, in that the conflict, at least at the urban level, in the twentieth century, seems like the continuation of the 19th century conflict, if at a more sophisticated level. English, in *Irish Freedom* (English 2006) frets over the true meaning of Irish nationalism, citing Breuilly, Anderson and Kedourie in an effort to pin down the elusive soul of Irish nationalism. He comes to the conclusion that 'In the end, then, Irish nationalism has been a modern phenomenon. But it has possessed historically embedded, constricting and defining roots, which go back into the pre-modern period of an Irish proto-nation' (English 2006: 504). Discussing the IRA rationale for its recent campaign under the rubrics of defence of the Catholic population, discrimination against that

population, the perceived illegitimacy of Northern Ireland and the 'irreformability' of Northern Ireland, English finds flaws in all these arguments (English 2003: 350).

Mallie and Bishop's *The Provisional IRA* (Mallie & Bishop 1993) is, effectively, a history of the Provisional IRA that utilises oral testimonies of IRA volunteers and members of 'active service units'.

> There were gunbattles almost nightly, and you ate and slept with your gun by your side. Our lifestyle was that you would start out at about eleven in the morning, picking up the pieces from the night before, then organising, getting supplies and planning. It was a question of living from day to day, working from eleven in the morning to six the following morning then falling off to sleep for a few hours in a safe house. After 9 August (start of internment without trial) I never slept at home. Shooting was a way of life. You did not go to dances or pubs. It was your life – shooting and looking for the Army. People became very close. Eating and sleeping together, fighting and dying together (Mallie & Bishop 1993: 196).

It is all quite a long way from the more arcane theories of nationalism; and a long way too, from the condemnation by a long-time critic of the Provisional IRA, Father Dennis Faul, a native of South Armagh, the area the British yellow press were wont to call 'bandit country': 'As the wise Denis Faul observed after the latest SAS cull of young Irishmen in 1992: The IRA is a crazy outfit and should be disbanded' (Geraghty 1998: 354).

Israeli Nationalism and Palestinian Nationalism – an Overview

> There are two striking differences between the Zionist movement and the Palestinian national movement and these have remained constant for about a century. One is that in terms of getting things done (mainly acquiring territory) Zionism was essentially a Benthamite policy of detail, whereas the Palestinian tendency – scarcely a policy – was to rely on unassailable general principles, which never prevented the ground from being literally cut out from under them (Said 1994: 33).

Smith's oft-cited question 'when is a nation?' has a striking corollary in the Israeli-Palestinian nexus: when does Zionism end (1948? 1967?) and when does Palestinian nationalism begin? (1917, with the Balfour Declaration? 1936, with the Arab Revolt?). The discussion below will alternate between the various waypoints in the development of both nationalisms for the very simple reason that one cannot be discussed without reference to the other. In as much as early Zionism, although it did not 'need' an enemy to prove its validity, chose to ignore, by and large, the reality of the local Palestinian population, early Palestinian nationalism is unthinkable without taking into account the reaction to Ottoman hegemony, British imperialism and Jewish settlement.

Nineteenth century Zionism and its natural outworking, Jewish immigration to Palestine, is a combination of push and pull factors. Pull factors include the rise of a specific Jewish nationalism. Push factors included the Russian pogroms of the 1880's. Hastings sets the rise of Zionism in the context of the rise of nationalism, in general: 'Zionism was a nationalist movement stimulated by the pressure of other nationalist movements within the European world. Its goal like theirs, was the creation of a nation-state and it is lamentable that studies of nationalism regularly avoid its consideration. Here, if anywhere, the basic order runs: nation, nationalism, nation-state' (Hastings 1997:187).

Moses Hess's *Rome and Jerusalem* (Hess 1862) was one of the earliest exemplars of a call for a return to Zion. The Jewish *Haskala,* or Enlightenment, best exemplified, perhaps, in the figure of Moses Mendelssohn (1779-1786), essentially assimilationist in nature in that it looked at a Jewish cultural resurgence within the context of already existing nations, is still a logical precursor to the unity of land, people and religion seen in the contemporary Jewish scholar Heinrich Graetz's

formulation that 'The Torah, the nation of Israel and the Holy Land stand, one might say, in a mystical relationships to each other; they are inseparably united by an invisible bond' (Shimoni 1995: 18). Nevertheless, Palestine as the goal of the Zionist territorial imperative was not self-evident: Uganda, Cyprus, North America and even Alaska were all, at one stage, possibilities. It was Herzl's convening of the First Zionist Congress, in Basle, in 1897, which saw the crystallisation of Zionism as a potential force (Beilin 1992: 3).

As Zionism developed, so too did the rift between the 'cultural' Zionists, well exemplified in the figure of Ahad ha-Am, and the 'political' Zionists. Even within this latter grouping, the emergence of 'Bundist' Zionism, effectively East European socialist in nature, into the body politic was to have an enormous influence both in the early aliyot (immigration to Palestine) and in the early years of the Israeli state. Such entities as the kibbutz movement, the Kupat Kholim health fund and the Histadrut labour organisation are unthinkable without the sort of socialist thinking prevalent in early Zionism. At what stage then, does Herzl's *Altneuland* run up against the buffers of the reality of Palestinian Arab society?

New Jewish colonies had already been established in Palestine well before the oft-cited watershed of the 1917 Balfour Declaration (Ben-Artzi 1998). Petah Tikvah, Rosh Pinah and Rishon le Zion, however shaky their economic bases, predate the influx of the second aliya (second wave of Jewish immigration to Palestine, 1904-1914), which laid the foundations for the nascent Israeli state, some thirty years later: the Hebrew language, urbanisation (Tel Aviv), newspapers, political parties and so forth. According to Gilbert, 'By 1914, there were 90,000 Jews living in Palestine, of whom 75,000 were immigrants. Since the setting up of the Jewish National Fund at the turn of the century, forty-three settlements had been

established on the land, with a population of 12,000' (Gilbert 1998: 30). It is not hard to see how, as the 'tipping-point' approached, Palestinian Arab agitation set in. Should we look on this pre-Balfour period then, as the 'navel' of Palestinian nationalism, to use Gellner's phrase?

> We can conclude, therefore, that Zionism did not create Palestinian nationalism. What Zionism did was provide the Palestinians with a focus for their national struggle. In other words, Zionism was the focus of the Palestinians and the pivot about which their politics centered. The origin and growth of Palestinian nationalism as a distinctive force that won the political loyalties and sentiments of all Palestinian Arabs can be found in the inter-Arab processes discussed earlier in the study. (Muslih 1988: 217)

Muslih's overview of the development of Palestinian nationalism begins by dividing early 20th century Palestinian elite society into three groups: urban notables, commercial bourgeoisie and foreign settlers/Lebanese landlords (Muslih 1988: 11-45). He points up the reaction to the Young Turk movement as being crucial in creating a Palestinian nationalist reaction (Muslih 1988: 60) while noting the cohesive force of the Arabic language (as opposed to Turkish) in the process (Muslih 1988: 58). While he claims that Palestinian reaction to Zionism began as early as 1882, he believes that 'anti-Zionism became a widespread phenomenon between 1909 and 1914, after the reinstitution of the constitution (Ottoman) and the freeing of the press' (Muslih 1988: 86-87). The Third Palestinian Arab Congress (December, 1920), coming on the heels of the Nebi Musa disturbances of 1919, is seen as crucial in cementing Palestinian opposition to Zionism encroachment (Muslih 1988: 204). Muslih concludes that Palestinian nationalism developed along a continuum from Arabism (1908-1914), through Arab nationalism (World War 1) to Palestinian nationalism (Muslih 1988: 212 – 213).

For Migdal and Kimmerling it is the revolt of 1837, set against the Ottoman Egyptian Ibrahim Pasha's conscription policies which mark the gelling of Palestinian

Arab nationalism (Migdal & Kimmerling 1991: 6). This feature of local reaction to Ottoman / Egyptian hegemony can be seen as link in the chain of de-Ottomanisation of Syria/ Palestine. In terms of the history of Palestinian Arab nationalism, however, it is simply the first *reactive nationalist* element in a chain of reactions: anti-Ottoman, anti-British, anti-Jewish immigrant. In this respect, Sayigh, speaks of the 1947 – 1948 War, as '...the end of a lengthy chapter in the conflict between Arab and Jew for possession of Palestine.' (Sayigh 1999: 1).

Although, in the general context portrayed by Hourani in *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age* (Hourani 1962) we can see the Arab reaction to the new realities of 19th century Europe as a modernising one, the local element must not be neglected either. In as much as the Arab Revolt of 1936-1939 and the first Intifada of 1987 were stepping-stones on the continuum of Palestinian nationalism, they are more reactive than ideology-based, .i.e., the motivating force behind the reaction was less ideological than pragmatic. The convincing picture painted in Muhammad Ali Taha's novel of the 1936-1939 Palestinian Arab revolt, *Sirat Bni Balut (*Taha 2004), which will be discussed in more detail, in a later chapter, is one of grassroots agitation against British occupation, melding into resistance to Jewish immigration. It is 'invasion' and, ultimately occupation and dispossession in 1948, rather than ideology, which is the driving force behind this phase of Palestinian nationalism. While the overlay of Islamic religious sentiment is now the hallmark of extremist Palestinian nationalism, it is the grassroots realities of dispossession, occupation and dispersal which lie at the heart of the Palestinian narrative.

The narrative of election, sacred land and covenant all come together in the early chapters of Genesis:

ואעשך לגוי גדול ואברכך ואגדלה שמך והיה ברכה

And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing (Gen. 12: 2)

ונתתי לך ולזרעך אחריך את ארץ מגוריך את כל ארץ כנען לאחזת עולם והיתי להם לאלוהים

And I will give unto thee, and to they seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God. (Gen. 17: 8)

Akenson provides a fascinating comparative study of covenant, conquest and land in *Covenant and Land in South Africa, Israel and Ulster* (Akenson 1992). Reviewing critical Old Testament texts, such as Genesis: 12: 2-3 (which details Israel's election) and Genesis 17: 6-8 (which speaks of the granting of the land of Canaan to Israel), he ties together election, covenant, land, people and the image of the enemy and finds for such unities in the (predominantly) Scottish Presbyterian settlement and plantation of East Ulster, early Zionist settlements and South African Boer culture. He is scathing about the appropriation of Palestinian lands.

> Yet Israel's system in one crucial aspect was different from South Africa's. Unlike the South Africans who refused to dissemble, the Israelis decided 'to stand up and lie like white men' (in P.J. O'Rourke's corrosive phrase). The appropriation of Palestinian lands and the economic, social, and often residential segregation of the indigene was never labelled as such. Always 'redemption' or 'security', or similar words were employed (Akenson 1992: 242)

In a meeting I attended, in late December 2007, held to discuss the issue of land appropriation, in the Arab town of Sakhnin, I was interested to find that the discussion was all about land, houses, space to grow crops and build houses for their children. It is out of such mundane concerns that *reactive nationalism* sprouts,

irrespective of ideology. The partial conversion of the Northern Irish civil rights campaign, in the late sixties, into a violent nationalist campaign, although it was, to some extent, abetted by the infiltration of nationalist agitators, was also helped by the intransigence of Loyalist/Protestant elites. It remains to be seen whether, in the current phase of community relations within Israel, a similar process will take place.

The narratives of 1948 are necessarily partisan. On the Palestinian side, Khalidi's early critique of the exodus of the Palestinians, *Why Did the Palestinians Leave? An Examination of the Zionist Version of the Exodus of 1948* (Khalidi 1959) lays down a strategic marker, not so much over numbers and dates, as over the core question: did they jump, or were they pushed? Nazzal takes a more detailed look at the conquest and flight in the area of the Western Galilee, interviewing families from such towns as al-Bassa (Israeli Betzet) and al-Zib (Israeli Achziv) and Kabri (Israeli Kibbutz Kabri), in refugee camps in Lebanon such as 'Ain al-Hilweh, Bourj al-Barajneh and Shatila (Nazzal 1974). Such micro-narratives give flesh to the idea that Palestinian nationalism, however we may quarrel about its roots, is forged in the furnace of 1948.

Khalidi's logging of some 400 depopulated Palestinian villages in *All That Remains: The Palestinian Villages Occupied and Depopulated by Israel in 1948* (Khalidi 1992), is comprehensive and verifiable in terms of location of the villages and the current situation. Abu Sitta's later work *Atlas of Palestine 1948* (Abu-Sitta 2007), makes use of more recent developments in technology to give a detailed view of Palestine in 1948, on the eve of the War of 1948. As with Khalidi, Abu Sitta relies, to some extent, on Israeli sources, in particular Morris' *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem* (Morris 1996).

In a later work, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited* (Morris 2004), Morris tackles what has become the nub of the whole issue: the question of whether or not the Jewish forces under Ben Gurion had a masterplan (such as 'Tochnit Dalet' – Morris doesn't think so) to make Palestine/Israel 'Arabrein'. Israeli revisionists, such as Pappe, in *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* (Pappe 2006), however, believe in a clear blueprint for the uprooting of the Palestinian population. Pappe cites the case of the 'purification' (to use the Hebrew phrase) of the villages near the Jewish settlement of Yechiam, near Nahariyya, in the Western Galilee.

> The Jewish troops who attacked the villages in operation 'Ben – Ami' in May 1948 were specifically told that the villages had to be eliminated in revenge for the loss of the (Yechiam) convoy. Thus the villages of Sumiriyya, Zib, Bassa, Kabra, Umm al –Faraj and Nahr were subjected to an upgraded, crueller version of the destroy – and – expel drill of the Israeli units: 'Our mission: to attack for the sake of occupation…to kill the men, destroy and set fires to Kabri, Umm al- Faraj and Nahr' (Pappe 2006: 141).

In *Sacred Landscape: The Buried History of the Holy Land Since 1948* (Benvenisti 2006), Benvenisti follows Pappe in using the concept of ethnic cleansing while cleaving to Anderson's paradigm as regards map-making and conquest. He ties in ground zero descriptions of what might be called 're-mapping', after 1948, with the concept of teaching *yediat ha'aretz* (knowing the land), 'an important component in the education of every young Jew in Eretz Israel' in the pre-state period (Benvenisti 2006: 57).

As with all history, half the burden is in the interpretation. Facts do not necessarily speak for themselves and neither, for that matter, do figures. Other Israeli authorities, such as Karsh, in *Fabricating Israeli History: The 'New Historians'* (Karsh 1997) decry the revisionist tendencies of Israeli revisionists, in particular Morris and Pappe. Nevertheless, it is difficult, given the highly organised and task-

focused nature of the Yishuv (the Jewish community in Palestine before the foundation of the State of Israel) to accept, with a straight face, that the depopulation of the villages of the Western Galilee, in particular, was a consequence of the random nature of what was, in effect, a civil war. To accept anything less is to suggest that the political and military leaders of the Jewish community in Palestine were as disorganised and disunited as their Palestinian Arab opposite numbers. This was clearly not the case, as Said himself has noted (Said 1994: 33).

On the other hand, the notion that the Jewish leaders of the Yishuv wanted to annihilate (in the German sense of *Vernichten*) the Palestinian population, is a fantasy at the further ends of Palestinian Islamist extremism. While there was no love lost between the Zionists and their Palestinian Arab neighbours, it is true, it is reasonable to argue that dispossession and deportation were the goals of the 1947 and 1948 Jewish/Israeli military campaigns not annihilation, as was the case in the German campaign against European Jewry. Although it is small comfort to the Palestinian internal and external refugees of 1948, a comparative note is instructive here: the Syrian army crackdown on Islamist insurgence in the Syrian city of Hama, in February 1982, managed to kill more Arab civilians than both the War of 1948 and the Sabra and Chatilla massacres of 1982 *together*: estimates for the Hama massacre range between 10,000-30,000 (Wiedl 2007: 4).

When we reach the present, we are faced with several concentric circles of enmity enveloping the Jewish State: the greater Islamic threat of the 'umma; the further Islamic threat, from countries such as Malaysia and Indonesia, the nearer Islamic threat, from countries such as Iran, Pakistan and the Sudan, the mid-range Arab threat, including Egypt and Syria, the nearer Palestinian 'pincer movement' enemies in Southern Lebanon, Gaza and, potentially, the West Bank and the

Palestinians within Israel. Kimmerling's sober reflection on this multi-mode reality is worth quoting.

> Even if a conclusive agreement is reach with the Palestinians, peace is made with Syria, and arrangements and 'normalisation' are arrived at with the 'outer circle' hostile Arab and Muslim states (e.g. Iraq, Libya and Iran), the objective and subjective situation of the Israeli State will hardly be altered from the external security point of view. The existential anxiety built into the collective identity and memory, which fuels expressions of the military-industrial complex, will continue to exist. A demonic worldview that always leads to self-fulfilling 'worst-case' prophecies will persist for at least another generation. Armed conflict will be reshaped into 'armed peace', frequently shackled by local clashes and mutual terror attacks initiated by peripheral but salient fundamentalist groups which will continue to exist (Kimmerling 2001: 236)

What is left of the Palestinian dream, on the other hand, is a truncated ('cantonised', according to the Druze writer and academic, Naim Araidi) state of sorts, on the West Bank, a possible partial (symbolic?) return of some refugees to the State of Israel and, perhaps, a relocation of internal refugees within Israel (Humphries 2004: 230). Bowyer-Bells' contention that 'The IRA is not a nation in waiting; the Palestinians are' has the sharp ring of reality about it. Time is not on the side of the Israelis; space is not on the side of the Palestinians. Neither nationalist narrative can win out totally, any more than it can on the island of Ireland and the binational idea, beloved of seventies European intellectuals, seems to have perished on the rocks of pragmatism: 'Ethnic groups, like Israeli Jews and Palestinians, are not defined by the fact that they follow certain leaders...thus, even if a binational Israeli / Palestinian framework is formally established, it is highly likely to collapse shortly afterwards' (Hermann 2005: 399).

The Phenomenon of Reactive Nationalism in Ireland and Israel / Palestine

> ...nationalist conflict represents the logical outcome of an ideational security dilemma between actors with radically different conceptions of both themselves and the Other, in which each seeks to defend its identity against challenges (real or perceived) from the Other. This is an essentially reactive model of nationalist conflict (Billingham 2007: 154).

Reactive nationalism, as noted earlier, needs no Gellnerian top-down directives. It is a dynamic counter-force which, in this thesis, will be considered under the following manifestations: land, language, the (changing) image of the enemy, violence and religion. Reactive nationalism is pragmatic, particular, protean and popular. It is pragmatic, because it is a spontaneous rather than a delayed response to threat. It is particular, because it manifests itself in different ways, at different times, in different societies. It is protean, because it can shape-change to suit circumstances. It is popular, because it represents less the manipulation of the elites and more the group reaction to threat. While reactive nationalism isn't totally independent of ideology, it is more likely to reflect ethnic tensions than ideological ones. As a type of nationalism that is less print-bound than other forms, it is less amenable to analysis and tends to be reflected more in oral accounts of actions rather than in written ones. A few examples from different societies will help to throw light on the phenomenon.

The Arab Revolt of 1936-1939, in British Mandate Palestine, is a classic example of reactive nationalism in modern times. According to the Palestinian writer, Ghassan Kanafani, born in the year the revolt started, both the success of the Zionist movement and 'conflict between local feudal-religious leadership and British imperialism' were the general causes for the uprising (Kanafani 1972). The killing by the British forces of the local Islamist leader, Izz al-Din al-Qassam, is also thought to

have aggravated matters. Kimmerling and Migdal highlight the role of the *shabab* in the initial outbreak (Kimmerling & Migdal 1992: 104). This sub-group of young Arab men, while being the most impressionable as regards rhetoric in the short term, is the least likely to be influenced by complicated expressions of nationalist ideology, over a longer period. The concerns of the *shabab*, such as they are, tend to be all that reactive nationalism is: pragmatic, particular, protean and popular. It is the revolt in the rural areas, particularly in the Galilee, however, that shows the true force of reactive nationalism and reveals, in particular, the importance of the trope of land in the conflict. The comparison with rural Ireland is highlighted by the Israeli commentator, Tom Segev, who notes that both Palestinians and Jews tended to see themselves in the role of the dispossessed Irish, fighting against British imperialism (Segev 2000: 433). Others have made comparisons between the 1936-1939 Revolt and the first Intifada (Stein 1990).

There is a certain logic to this: while the *al-Aksa* Intifada is seen, even by many Palestinian commentators (Nusseibeh 2007), as a less than spontaneous campaign – and an ultimately destructive one for the Palestinian community, at that – the first Intifada (1987) is universally seen among Palestinians as a righteous and spontaneous expression of anger. The *al-Aksa* Intifada, however, does not fit the reactive nationalist bill 'It is equally true, however, that the Intifada, and the Israeli security response to it, have had a devastating impact on Palestinian livelihoods. However much Israeli actions may be criticized, those who wage the Intifada and decide on its tactics also bear heavy responsibility for the pauperization of Palestinian society' (La Guardia 2001: 310). The 'manipulation by the elites', therefore, was a feature of the second Intifada, rather than the first. The first Intifada

was the true expression of violent reactive nationalism, and a successor to the 1936-1939 Arab Revolt.

> The Intifada surprised all the major actors because organisers became increasingly entrenched below the surface of everyday indignities and disempowerment, where the collective idea of what was and what could affirm an individual's humanity. Palestinians emerged throwing stones from the ground beneath them, from the land they firmly believed they had to liberate in order to liberate themselves. The process of shaking off the oppressive apparatus of Israeli military rule and asserting a unified Palestinian identity in the larger Arab context became what is internationally known as the Intifada (Farsoun & Zacharia 1997: 217)

While it is usual to consider the outbreak of hostilities in Northern Ireland, between the British Army and the re-emergent IRA as an expression of age-old Irish nationalism, the Loyalist side of the equation is often neglected. The Ulster Workers' Council strike of 1977 - targeting, variously, the British and Irish government-backed power-sharing assembly, the Catholic minority, the British government itself and, in a minor way, the government of the Republic of Ireland - was an expression of Loyalist reactive nationalism. While the Protestant elites may have seemed to be in control of their co-religionists during the campaign, it was the Protestant working-class terror groups, such as the UDA and UVF, which were the 'cutting edge' of the campaign.

The Dublin and Monaghan bombings of May 1974 were a working class paramilitary Loyalist warning to the Dublin government to 'withdraw from any attempt to implement a joint British-Irish Council for the governance of Northern Ireland' (McDonald & Cusack 2004: 78). The visceral Loyalist reaction to both the terror campaign of the Provisional IRA and the power-sharing government, bears all the traits of reactive nationalism: pragmatic, protean, particular and popular. The seamless campaign of shutting down power stations was accompanied by the killing of Catholics within Northern Ireland, the confinement of the minority to their

'ghettoes' and the 'decoupling' of the Irish government from direct 'interference' in the affairs of Northern Ireland. Like the first Palestinian Intifada, however, a later replication, the Loyalist strike of 1977, was a relative failure (Fisk 1975).

Manifestations of reactive nationalism are quantifiable in the international arena too. Contemporary tensions between China and Japan, relating to the World War 2 misdeeds of Japan – and some which predate that war, such as the Rape of Nanjing in December 1937- are described by Chan and Bridges as reactive nationalist in kind (Chan & Bridges 2006). This is distinguished from assertive nationalism as it is a response to injury and insult, both in the past: 'The nature of Chinese popular nationalism is reactive nationalism. There is a general anti-Japanese feeling among the Chinese people, which mainly comes from their wounded experiences in the War of Resistance' (Chan & Bridges 2006: 135). Speaking of states and the concept of reactive nationalism, this time in the Sino-American context, Billingham notes that threats to a state may not simply be physical in nature but also social or ideational (Billingham 2007: 152). Billingham's state-based model is just as applicable to ethnic groups, such as Northern Irish Protestants, Northern Irish Catholics and Israeli Arabs.

In the case of Palestinian citizens of Israel, the violent reactions of this particular societal cleavage – some 20% of the Israeli population – during the Land Day disturbances of 1976 and the October 2000 riots, when twelve Arab citizen of Israel were killed by Israeli police gunfire, bear an eerie parallel to the events of Bloody Sunday, in Derry, in January 1972. In the Israeli case, Palestinians were reacting to the outbreak of the *al-Aksa* Intifada and the deaths of their Palestinian brethren on the West Bank and Jerusalem; in the Northern Irish case, the catholic *shabab* of Derry, on a civil rights march against internment without trial, were

reacting to the presence of the British Parachute Regiment invading the Bogside area. The events I witnessed, as noted earlier, on the night of October 30th, 2007, in the Druze Arab town of Pekiin / al-Buqea, in the Western Galilee, bear all the hallmarks too, of reactive nationalist fervour, on the ground. Like the events of October 2000 in Northern Israel and January 1972 in Northern Ireland, they represent a reactive nationalist response, at the micro level, to intrusion. The youths who rioted in both situations may have had a generalised notion of nationalist ideology about their actions but, by and large, those actions were reactive and non- ideological in nature.

A number of things were clear about the disturbances: no great nationalist *ideological* groundswell was at play here; a number of policemen were wounded by gunfire and makeshift weapons; a number of the *shabab* were shot; an Israeli policewoman was held hostage in the *khilweh* (Druze holy house) until the arrested *shabab* were released; the Druze community in the town, on the heels of the disturbances, became suddenly fearful of the young men in their own community and, with tacit co-operation from the Israeli authorities, instigated a ground zero crackdown on bad behaviour, targeting the fathers of the young men involved. As in Israel, so on the West Bank and Northern Ireland. The *shabab*, in as much as they are the footsoldiers of the revolution, are potentially its greatest liability, after the revolution.

It is important, at this point, to highlight a number of relevant nationalist traditions which do not come under the rubric of reactive nationalism. The two closest to the ambit of this discussion are the nationalist campaigns of Zionism and of Southern Irish Republicanism. In the case of Zionism, 1948 is to be taken as the terminus ad quem, i.e., the foundation of the state of Israel; in the case of the South of Ireland, it is the foundation of the Free State (1922) which is taken as the end-

point of 'state-building' nationalism. In both cases, the point will be made that these nationalist 'programs', unlike the Palestinian and Northern Irish nationalist programs, lie without the ambit of reactive nationalism.

'You've got to hand it to the Israelis, even if you don't like them, they have their land and their language'
Provisional IRA prisoner, Portlaoise Prison, 1990

Nationalism needs an Other. In this respect, Zionism is no different to other nationalisms. In the case of Zionism in the pre-Israeli Yishuv, however, the *ideological* enemy of Zionism, far from being the Palestinian Arab population, was the diaspora Jew. The negation of the Yiddish-speaking, pliant, diaspora Jew is central to the development of Zionism's self-image, in the thirties and forties (Almog 2000). In speaking of the possible reactive elements in Zionism, although we may mention the Russian pogroms of the 1880's, the messianism of the likes of Rabbis Kalischer, Alkalai and Hess predates these events. That is to say, ideology, albeit Jewish messianic ideology, predates both the reaction to the Russian pogroms and the crystallization of Zionist thought, at the end of the 19th century. If we move back further along the timeline to the pre-modern period, the nostalgia for the lost homeland is evident as far back as the Sephardic Jewish tradition of Spain, in Judah Halevi's plaintiff cry:

לבי במזרח ואנוכי בסוף מערב
My heart is in the East, and I am at the edge of the West

Zionism, therefore, if it was reacting to anything, was reacting to the conditions of diaspora life and the *Heimweh*, real or imagined, of exile. Jewish

nationalism, in other words, is an example of the *longue durée* process in the development of nationalism, at the latter end of which the *haskalah* (Jewish Enlightenment) in the 19th century, gave way to the rise in territorial Jewish nationalism. This paralleled, if belatedly, the rise in nationalism in many European countries, including Ireland. In the case of Zionism, the reification of land and language set the Jewish nationalist impulse in ideological aspic:

> From the outset, Jewish nationalism has been marked by a distinction between a territorial and an ethnic principle, i.e., between land and people...although a group with typical hallmarks, the Jews lacked the conventional national attributes, such as a common language and territory. However, they did retain a certain link to the 'Holy Tongue', classical Hebrew, as well as a spiritual link to the 'Holy Land.' In time, both these factors would contribute to the formation of a Jewish national consciousness (Almog 1996: 46)

The singular achievement of Zionism in creating 'a full panoply of secular culture proceeding from a point of departure where the national language was identified only with the sacred domain, and had initially no links with the realities of everyday life of the masses' (Reinharz & Shapira 1996: 10) is unparalleled in the history of nationalism. This achievement was not dependent on any oppositional pose as regards Palestinian nationalism although, according to Kimmerling, the 'basic premises of the Yishuv identity and the presumed communal rules of the game' were the following: all or part of British mandate Palestine was to be the basis for the Jewish state, the Yishuv was a continuation of ancient biblical society, traditional Jewish religious motifs were used to draw in new immigrants, the adoption of Hebrew, which 'symbolized both discontinuity from exile- developed culture and the supposed reconstruction of biblical Israel' and a hybrid Jewish calendar was to be adopted(Kimmerling 2001: 92-93). Nowhere here is there any mention of the type of oppositional stereotyping (*not-English / not-Protestant*), so

beloved of the Irish nationalist tradition and, in particular, the Irish language revivalist stance, as detailed by O'Leary in *The Prose Literature of the Gaelic Revival: 1881-1921* (O'Leary 1994: 19-90), a work whose time-frame almost exactly parallels that of the revival phase of Hebrew and points up, among other things, the essentially negative nature of Irish nationalism.

The restrictive nature of reactive nationalism – pragmatic, particular, protean, popular – is simply no match for the march of ideology based on *Realpolitik*, as Zionism, particularly that of the second aliya, was. In this respect, it is the Jewish immigrants of the second aliya, the majority from Poland and Belarus, with their blend of socialism, state-building, secularism and language revival, who set the real basis for the future Israeli state. It is no surprise, therefore, that in the annals of post-colonial cultural commentary, they are the most demonised (Cleary 2002: 83-84). It is the very success of the immigrants of the second aliya and their descendants, Ashkenazi and Sephardic Jewish, in creating a pre-state culture, almost *ex nihilo* (Reinharz & Shapira 1996: 10), and the emergence, in modern Israel, of Billig's much-vaunted 'banal nationalism' (Billig 1995), which is the true mark of the success of the Zionist state-building program.

In terms of nationalism on the island of Ireland, in the twentieth century, it is possible to make the following distinction: the nationalist traditions in the south of Ireland which culminated in the 1916 Rising fit within the remit of standard 19th century European nationalism; the nationalist tradition in Northern Ireland, in the late twentieth century, which culminated in the campaign of the Provisional IRA, from the 1970's onwards, should be catalogued under the rubric of *reactive nationalism*.

The conquest and occupation of the area south of the natural division of the Drumlin countryside of Cavan and Monaghan (former counties of Ulster, but now

lying within Southern Ireland) can be viewed under three phases: the 8th- 9th century Viking settlement of the (mostly) littoral areas on the East and South coast of the South of Ireland; the Norman conquest of the 12th century onwards, which included such inland areas as Dublin, Kilkenny and Cork; the Tudor, Elizabethan and Cromwellian plantations of the 16th and 17th centuries. The sort of confessional – based plantation campaigns, particularly noticeable in Down and Antrim (East Ulster), in Northern Ireland, have no meaningful parallel in the south. From the beginning, plantation in the North of Ireland had a confessional / ethnic bias, as pointed out by Akenson (Akenson 1992).

The rise of nationalism in the South of Ireland, in particular, has been well situated in the three-phase paradigm of Hroch, by Hutchenson (Hutchenson 1987). This involves, as mentioned above, the sensitisation of educated elites to the ambient culture (in this case, to a great extent Anglo-Irish/ Protestant southerners); the spread of that interest downwards (in this case, to the mostly Catholic lower orders); the popularisation of the nationalist / cultural message. The granting of Catholic emancipation, in 1829, didn't so much mean an end to agitation by the majority Catholic community as a grudging acceptance by others that it had a legitimate voice. By the end of the famine, therefore, in the late 1840's, despite the depredations suffered on the island of Ireland, religion and culture (in the broadest sense) were already two strings to the nationalist bow. The formation of such local organisations as the Callan Tenant Protection Society, by two priests, in Callan, Co. Kilkenny, in 1849, was an earnest of the fact that land would now become part of nationalist agitation.

The Home Rule movement and the emergent language revival movement, of the late 19th century, added to this momentum. The emergence of a new physical

force tradition, in the form of the Fenians, in the mid to late 19th century, meant that southern Irish nationalism had imbibed many of the standard tropes of nationalism: land, language, religion/ethnicity, violent action, identification of the enemy (in this case, by and large, the British government). What is distinctive too, about southern Irish nationalism, is the degree to which it is swaddled in standard issue nationalist ideology. Golden Age romanticism (a harking back to Celtic times), *Insula Sacra* notions (buoyed up by memories of monastic purity) and notions of Election (the particularism of the Irish was a core value) were all part of the *table d'hôte* of southern Irish nationalism.

The 1916 Rising in the south of Ireland, a natural culmination of the nationalist campaign and its physical force tendency, shows the contrasts between Northern Irish and Southern Irish nationalism (the term Republicanism is often used in the Irish context where nationalism is more appropriate): the inbuilt sectarianism of Northern Irish nationalism is, by and large, absent in the south; there are representatives from most classes found in the southern Irish nationalist movement; a reasonably comprehensive – if not any more rational than any other – nationalist ideology is at work in the south of Ireland.

While it is true that the anti-settler rising of 1641 took place in the south of Ireland as well as in the north, there was a particular sectarian edge to the anti – planter campaign in Ulster. While it is also true to say too, that the 1798 Rebellion, led by Wolfe Tone, gained its legitimacy from the French Republican tradition and that Presbyterian elements fought with Catholics against the vested interests of both the British government and the Established Church, the ideological purity of Republicanism was too well polluted by sectarian ('party spirit') sentiment for Ulster nationalism to remain free of it. With the migration of the Catholic and Protestant

labouring classes into Belfast, in the early nineteenth century then, the stage was set for the urbanisation of the sectarian conflict and its translation from its rural origins, particularly in Mid-Ulster, which region reflected some of the bitterest sectarian killings, in the 1970's and 1980's.

Northern Irish nationalism, whether Loyalist ('Ulster nationalism') or Republican, is nothing if not sectarian. It could hardly be otherwise given the history, both distant and recent, of both communities in Ulster, from the 17th century onwards. With the foundation of Northern Ireland, in 1922 and the partition of the island, the sectarian nature of the state where Protestant / Unionist hegemony was the order of the day, underwritten by the British taxpayer, a sectarian clash over Catholic civil rights was inevitable. When this campaign morphed into the nationalist / sectarian campaign of the Provisional IRA, in 1970, in a display of reactive nationalist revenge which had, as its targets, both British and Loyalists / Protestants, a replay of the sort of sectarian encounters of the 18th and 19th centuries mentioned by Hirst (Hirst 2002) became the order of the day. Northern Irish nationalism, therefore, particularly in the twentieth century, is marked by three main differences, with respect to southern Irish nationalism: it is essentially sectarian in tenor (despite the Republican rhetoric of the nationalist actors), its violent deeds are carried out, by and large, by working-class Catholics (IRA, INLA), in parallel with working-class Protestants (in organisations such as the UDA and UVF) and it is lacking in the multi-layered ideological nationalism which is part-and-parcel of the European nationalist tradition going back to the particularism of Herder and Fichte.

The nationalist campaign in the south of Ireland which culminated in the 1916 Rising and the War of Independence, sits well within the ethno-symbolist paradigm of Smith, where age-old ethnic realities and modernising nationalist

theories merge; the nationalist campaign of the Provisional IRA (and, earlier on, the Official IRA), on the other hand, is best described as a reactive nationalist campaign which was popular (among working-class Catholics in rural and urban Northern Ireland), pragmatic (a response to the real or perceived intransigence of the predominantly Unionist / Protestant government to Catholic civil rights demands in the late sixties), protean (over the period of 'the Troubles', it changed from a defence-of-Catholic areas strategy, to an outright nationalist irredentist campaign) and particular (Northern Ireland, from the early seventies onwards).

Reactive Nationalism in Irish Literature

'Why didn't you knock on the sides of the tank? Why didn't you say anything? Why?'
'The Desert suddenly began to send back the echo:
'Why didn't you knock on the sides of the tank? Why didn't you bang on the sides of the tank? Why? Why? Why?
(*Men in the Sun*, Ghassan Kanafani)

The representation of reactive nationalism is to be distinguished from the phenomenon of *resistance literature*, although some writers, such as Kanafani, may represent reactive nationalism in their writing while at the same time considering themselves engaged in the classic sense illuminated by Sartre in *What is Literature?* (Sartre 1949; 1988). Along with Kanafani, Harlow lists Chinua Achebe, Tayeb Salih and Julio Cortazar, among others, in her list of novelists who fit under the resistance literature rubric (Harlow 1987). Nevertheless, the representation of reactive nationalism in the novels in this discussion, is *refractive* rather then simply *reflective* and *interested* rather than *engaged.* The phenomenon of 'the elephant in the living room' has been noted by more than one commentator, in terms of the impossibility

for an artist, of ignoring the dynamic reality around him in such situations as that obtaining in Northern Ireland or in Israel / Palestine. It is this subliminal need to refract reality, which is at the heart of the representation of the various tropes of reactive nationalism in the novels selected.

A few examples from the canon of Irish literature will highlight the presence of reactive nationalism, over time, in the early Irish novel. *The Wild Irish Girl* (Owenson 1806) by Sydney Owenson, later Lady Morgan, was written in the shadow of the Act of Union (1800), which itself aimed to curb French revolutionary influence in Ireland and Irish republicanism, and the campaign for Catholic emancipation.

LETTER I

TO J.D. ESQ. M.P.

Dublin, March—, 17—

I remember, when I was a boy, meeting somewhere with the quaintly written travels of *Moryson* through Ireland, and being particularly stuck with his assertion, that so late as the days of Elizabeth, an Irish chieftain and his family were frequently seen seated round their domestic fire in a state of perfect nudity. This singular anecdote (so illustrative of the barbarity of the Irish at a period when civilization had made such a wonderful progress even in its sister countries), fastened so strongly on my boyish imagination, that whenever the *Irish* were mentioned in my presence, an *Esquimaux* group circling round the fire which was to dress a dinner, or broil an enemy, was the image which presented itself to my mind; and in this trivial source, I believe, originated that early formed opinion of Irish ferocity, which has since been nurtured into a *confirmed prejudice*.

(*The Wild Irish Girl*, Owenson, 1806: 4)

'In The Wild Irish Girl, the language, religion, and traditions of the Gaelic Irish, embodied in the heroine Glorvina, wholly seduce the English adventurer Horatio. Revolutionary movements such as the Society of United Irishmen are acknowledged but are ascribed to a misguided patriotism recuperable through the

reversal of injurious colonial policies. The plot of Owenson's novel directly addresses issues of colonial guilt and reparation' (Tracy 2004: 1). The novel refracts the realities of the new Irish colonial situation, while acknowledging the even rougher realities of the Cromwellian plantation and the asymmetric relationship between Britain and Ireland.

Charles Kickham who, according to Yeats, was the 'most rambling and yet withal most vivid, humorous, and most sincere of Irish novelists', published *Knocknagow* in 1879, after four years penal servitude for Fenian activities. *Knocknagow*, a hearthside companion in many Irish homes of the late 19th and 20th centuries, is a sentimental nationalist telling of landlordism in Kickham's native Tipperary. *Knocknagow* reflects both a general yearning for freedom from British rule, on the one hand, and the realities of agrarian agitation. Kickham's Matt the Thrasher character, is the author's native Irish take on the broth-of-a-lad depiction of a similar archetype, Flurry Knox (a native Irish 'fixer'), depicted by the Anglo- Irish writers Somerville and Ross in *Some Experiences of an Irish R.M.* (1899) yarns. Kickham's tale convinces, not so much at an artistic level, as at a socio-political level. It reflects and refracts the reality of land agitation and nationalist concerns at, so to speak, the ground zero of 19th century rural Ireland, without utilising overweening and indigestible wadges of nationalist ideology.

As we might expect, the Joycean take on Irish nationalism is, at once, rejectionist and accepting (Attridge & Howes 2000). Joyce was appalled by the negative nationalism displayed by Patrick Pearse, when he attended Pearse's Gaelic classes : 'Joyce gave them up because Patrick Pearse, the instructor, found it necessary to exalt Irish by denigrating English, and in particular denounced the word Thunder – a favourite of Joyce's – as an example of verbal inadequacy' (Ellmann

1965: 62). It is noticeable, in the following extract from the short story Araby, that Joyce deliberately elides romantic love with romantic nationalism, using the keynote of 'confused adoration'.

> Her image accompanied me even in places the most hostile to romance. On Saturday evenings when my aunt went marketing I had to go to carry some of the parcels. We walked through the flaring streets, jostled by drunken men and bargaining women, amid the curses of labourers, the shrill litanies of shop – boys who stood on guard by the pigs' cheeks, the nasal chanting of street – singers, who sang a come – all –you about O'Donovan Rossa or a ballad about the troubles in our native land. These noises converged in a single sensation of life for me: I imagined that I bore my chalice safely through a throng of foes. Her name sprang to my lips at moments in strange prayers and phrases which I myself did not understand. My eyes were often full of tears (I could not tell why) and at times a flood from my heart seemed to pour itself out into my bosom. I thought little of the future. I did not know whether I would ever speak to her or not, or if I spoke to her, how I could tell her of my confused adoration. But my body was like a harp and her words and gestures were like fingers running upon the wires (Joyce 1965: 25).

Thus, the adolescence of nations, nationalism, finds an emotional parallel in the adolescence of the young man at the centre of *Araby*.

The celebrated row – the Christmas dinner scene - over the character and heritage of the Protestant Irish nationalist leader, Parnell, in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, displays yet again, the awe, if not respect, in which Joyce held the visceral forces of nationalism.

> -Oh, he'll remember all this when he grows up, said Dante hotly – the language he heard against God and religion and priests in his own home.
> -Let him remember too, cried Mr Casey to her from across the table, the language with which the priests' pawns broke Parnell's heart and hounded him into his grave. Let him remember that too when he grows up.
> -Sons of bitches! Cried Mr Dedalus. When he was down they turned on him to betray him and rend him like rats in a sewer. Low-lived dogs! And they look it! By Christ, they look it!
> (Joyce 1971: 34)

By the time we come to Ulysses, and Joyce's celebrated parody of Michael Cusack, the nationalist leader, in the form of 'the Citizen', in the Cyclops episode, Joyce has, to an extent, made up his mind: the almost naïve cosmopolitanism and humanism of Bloom over the narrow, self-aggrandising stance of the standard issue nationalist.

In the context of the representation of reactive nationalism, we should mention the Anglo-Irish writer Elizabeth Bowen's *The Last September* (1929), which deals, from the point of view of the 'planter', with the Irish War of Independence, in 1920. The certainties of the Anglo-Irish world collapse to the sound of tennis balls and rife fire: 'He told her that there had been a catastrophe yesterday, west of Clonmore: a patrol with an officer and an N.C.O. had been ambushed, fired on at a cross-roads, the officer-Lesworth-was instantly killed and the N.C.O. shot in the stomach.' (Bowen 1982: 201). Brendan Behan's *Borstal Boy* (1958), on the other hand, is a picaresque telling, from a first-person point of view, of the author's own involvement with the Republican movement and his imprisonment in England, as a teenager, for possessing explosives. The political – if not alcoholic – sobering-up of the young Behan, after the intoxication of nationalist sentiment, is sensitively told. What is interesting, from the political point of view, is the absence of sectarian sentiment in what is more memoir than *Bildungsroman.* The enemy, in Behan's book, is clearly not the Protestant (southern or northern) planter but the British metropole and its overlords.

In terms of reactive nationalism in the context of modern day Northern Ireland, many works might be mentioned but a couple will suffice here. *Falls Memories* (Adams 1982), is a lachrymose account of Gerry Adams' childhood and life in the Republican movement, along with more than a dollop of the pre-history of

'The Troubles'. The sectarian note is never far from the surface, in Northern Irish nationalist / loyalist narratives, however.

> I was surprised therefore in my youth to be knocked back for a part-time job by a genial Orangeman who told me pleasantly 'I'm sorry, son, but we don't employ your sort here. Cudn't do it. You dig with the wrong fut (sic).' Although taken aback, I wasn't long in catching on. It was the name of the school that didt it, on top of my home address.' (Adams 1982: 114)

The Whore Mother (Herron 1973), by Shaun Herron, is a harsh telling of the life of a Provisional IRA volunteer who wants to leave the movement. Its acerbic view of violent Irish nationalism – the author was an Ulster Protestant minister - manages to contrast both the Northern Irish and Southern Irish nationalist traditions in a way which, unfairly perhaps at times, points up the sectarian heart of Northern Irish nationalism. *Harry's Game* (Seymour 1975), on the other hand, although competently written by a seasoned British journalist with plenty of 'ground zero' experience of the seventies in Northern Ireland, sits within the canon of well-written thrillers which use the situation as a convenient backdrop. A novel such as Deirdre Madden's *One by One in the Darkness* (Madden 1996), on the other hand, is a nuanced telling of the life of a Northern Irish Catholic family in the late sixties and early seventies. A quiet, authoritative work, it explores the tensions between the Civil Rights reaction to discrimination and the nationalist one.

Reactive Nationalism in Palestinian Literature

The Israeli commentator on Palestinian Arabic literature, Elad-Bouskilla, notes acerbically that:

> One of the most intriguing questions is why most Jewish intellectuals in Israel do not know Arabic. This is an anomaly. One would expect that those who define themselves as progressive, liberal and leftist would study the language and culture of their (around 200 million) Arab neighbours and of the Arabic minority

> in Israel. Instead, there is an interesting dialectical process in which those who express solidarity with the 'other side' – the Arabs – consistently refuse to acknowledge the need to know its language and culture (Elad-Bouskilla 1999: 15)

It is interesting to note that, while most young Palestinians, particularly those living in the State of Israel, have fluent Hebrew, very few Israeli 'Jewish intellectuals', as Elad-Bouskilla puts it, have any familiarity either with colloquial or literary Arabic. This 'deafness' speaks volumes about the low socio-linguistic status of Arabic within the State of Israel and about the extraordinary intellectual laxity of Elad-Bouskilla's 'intellectuals'.

As Al-Osta notes, in his overview of the Palestinian novel, *Die Juden in der palästinensischen Literature zwischen 1913 und 1987* (Al-Osta 1993), that Ishaq al-Husayni, author of what is considered one of the earliest Palestinian novels, *Memoirs of a Chicken* (al-Husayni 1943; 1999), was very familiar with the three-faith reality of the Jerusalem of his time. Al-Husayni's novel, published before the expulsion/flight of the War of 1948, is couched in the form of an allegory: a hen is attacked by giants and then counselled to relinquish her home to strangers. As McKean Parmenter points out: 'The story created a controversy because it was unclear whether al-Husayni was praising traditional Arab hospitality or ridiculing Arab political leadership' (Maher 1998: 88). Al-Husayni's novel is reactive in that it reflects the nationalist concerns of Palestinians and refractive because, as a novel, it employs artifice (in this case, Orwellian allegory) to couch its reaction.

Kanafani clearly saw himself in the tradition of resistance literature, publishing, in 1968, *Palestinian Resistance Literature under the Occupation* (Kanafani 1968). Nevertheless, it is the representation – and representation is not necessarily conscious – of the realities of the Israeli-Palestinian situation which are at issue here. Along with *Men in the Sun* (Kanafani 1969), *Return to Haifa* (Kanafani

1982) is probably Kanafani's best known work. Written on the heels of the 1967 Six Day War, it utilises the 'blood brothers' motif of a Palestinian baby left behind, during the Palestinian flight from Haifa, and raised by an Israeli Jewish couple. (A similar motif, with a nod to Kanafani, is employed by the Iraqi Jewish Israeli writer Sami Michael, in his 2005 novel *Doves in Trafalgar*). Language is at the reactive nationalist heart of the novel. 'Kanafani has his characters resort to English in order to communicate probably hinting at the impossibility for and understanding between the two nations' (Caspi & Weltsch 1998: xxxi).

Jabra Ibrahim Jabra's novel, *The Ship* (Jabra 1995), is at once allegorical and realistic, which is how, according to Allen, its author intended it to appear (Allen 1982: 71). *The Ship* is a mixture of the mundane and the metaphorical. Interspersed between the details of the emotional relationships between its high class cast list, and set apart from the sometime prolix nature of the philosophical discourses, the 'real-time' memories of military encounters in Jerusalem, in 1948, stand out as heartfelt representations of reactive nationalist violence. The fact, as Allen allows, that Jabra lost a close friend in the fighting, explains the emotional intensity of the description of the military action in which Fayiz and Wadi are involved (Allen 1982: 141). It is, perhaps, this unconscious rendering, with its emotional rather then philosophical or political engagement, which convinces most. The magic, therefore, is in the mundane, as it is with the likes of Joyce.

Emil Habibi published *The Secret Life of Said the Pesoptimist* in 1974 (Habibi 1985) on the heels of the Yom Kippur War, although it had been serialised in *al-Itihad* much earlier. It is the story of 'the little man', in the tradition of the Good Soldier Schweik, Juha, or Gimpel the fool. It is a sophisticated take, from a linguistic, literary and political point of view, on the situation of 'the Arabs of '48',

as the Palestinian colloquial term for Palestinians living in Israel has it. The collaborationist realities played out in Hillel Cohen's *Army of Shadows* (Cohen 2008), which deals with Palestinian collaboration with Zionism in the 1917-1948 period, and *Good Arabs* (Cohen 2006) which deals with collaboration in the new state, shed much light on the world of the real 'Pesoptimists'. As the Israeli commentator Yitzak Laor has noted 'Anyone who wants to understand the background to Emile Habibi's "The Secret Life of Saeed: The Pessoptimist" or the extensive research Elias Khoury did for his great novel "Gate of the Sun-Bab al-Shams," can now read the documents from the Israeli side in Cohen's book.' (Laor 2007). Habibi's novel shows the reactive reality of life on the ground, without the seamless narrative of Palestinian nationalism, on the one hand, which suggests that all Palestinian Arabs are natural patriots and the Israeli narrative, on the other, which speaks of compliant Arabs as 'good Arabs.' It is the subtle anarchy of the much put upon Said, unterhero of the novel, which convinces. Neither entirely stooge or patriot, his nationalism reflects something a lot deeper: a yearning for dignity and name and place, after the disaster of the war of 1948.

Sahar Khalifeh is best known for her novel *Wild Thorns* (Khalifeh 1977; 2005). According to the foremost translator of Palestinian literature, Salma Khadra Jayyusi, 'No other Palestinian writer of fiction has equaled her capacity to reproduce the rhythms, intonations, vocabulary, and cast of mind of the Palestinian urban classes – menial workers and intellectuals alike – and she reveals great artistic decorum in the way she varies her language according to the status and education of the character she is delineating' (Jayyusi 1992: 42). *Wild Thorns*, written in the aftermath of the Six Day War, deals with the realities of Palestinian resistance, to the occupation of the West Bank.

The story of Usama, the central character – a young Palestinian recently returned from the Gulf - is not particularly complex, but it is credible. The muted melodrama of reactive nationalist violence (it is some ten years after the occupation of the West Bank, in 1967 and ten years before the outbreak of the first Intifada) reaches it apogee when Usama stabs an Israeli officer to death, in front of his wife and child, in the presence of the Palestinian woman, Um Sabir. 'Um Sabir's eyes met those of the Israeli woman; she seemed to be begging for help and screaming in pain. Involuntarily, something was shaking the locked doors of Um Sabir's heart. She softened and responded to the woman's unspoken plea. 'God have mercy on you!' she muttered' (Khalifeh 2005: 159). The customary destruction of the family home goes ahead. Life, on the streets, goes on much as before 'A newspaper boy passed by, crying: Al-Quds! Al-Shaab! Al-Fajr! Kissinger announces solution to Middle East Crisis!' Farid al-Atrash continued to lament the unhappy day of his birth. People went about their business, buying vegetables, fruit and bread.' (Khalifeh 2005: 207).

Mahmoud Shuqair has spoken about the centrality of writing in his life thus: 'If style is the man, it is equally true that the moment of writing is the essence of the writer's life.' (Shukair 2000: 46). Jailed by the Israeli authorities and finally deported from Israeli in 1975, Shuqair returned to Jerusalem in 1993, on the heels of the Oslo Accords. His collection of short stories and 'vignettes'- *Mordechai's Moustache and his Wife's Cats* (Shuqair 2007) - reflect, at one and the same time, a modernist approach to narrative and a throwback to the Arabic short narrative form (such as the *maqamat* of al-Hamadhani). In reacting to the 'elephant in the living room' aspect of the situation, Shuqair, like Habibi before him, realises that satire is the little man's literary nuclear device, a technique that reaches the parts other socio-realist styles do not reach. When the eponymous Mordechai volunteers for (belated) military service,

> They were a mixture of human beings: men of various ages, old women who could only stand with difficulty, and young women, some of whom wore tight trousers while others were wrapped in flowing garments that covered their bodies and wore white or coloured scarves on their heads. Conflicting ideas and feelings overcame him. He was almost ready to express his sympathy for these unarmed human beings waiting for a hand gesture from him. However, the security of the state was greater than all other considerations and this made him suppress any tender feelings; for these people – in the final analysis – were the enemies of Israel! And in order to strengthen feelings of harshness within him, he rejected any possibility of looking at children, old women, and aged men, and decided to focus his stern looks on young men, the source of danger, the origin of trouble: for it was they who were the saboteurs girding themselves with explosive belts or concealed Kalashnikov machine guns under their jackets to plant death in the chests of Israelis (Shukair 2007: 25-26).

Reactive Nationalism in Israeli Literature

Writing of the new Hebrew literature, two years after the foundation of the State of Israel, the critic Shimon Halkin asked 'Where do we go from here? Can Hebrew literature in Israel – can Israeli civilisation, for that matter – well afford to disengage itself from its preoccupation with the fate of the Jew and Judaism, all over the world?' (Halkin 1950: 217). Having tracked pre-Israeli literature through Italy, Germany and Holland (1730-1820), Austria and Southwestern Russia (1810-1860), 'Russia proper' (1840-1920), Halkin's question is a reasonable one. If no other modern literature is as bound up with the fundamentals of language revival as Hebrew, no other language is as bound up with the foundation of a state either.

S. Yizhar is often cited as an early 'revisionist' writer, in that he challenges the Israeli state's clearcut 1948 narratives. Yizhar's stories 'The Prisoner' (Yizhar 1949; 1989) and 'The Story of Hirbet Hizah' (Yizhar 1949; 1989) deal with the

distress of Palestinian refugees / prisoners during the Israeli War of Independence. As Yudkin notes, 'The Prisoner' was actually written in November 1948, in the middle of the chaos (Yudkin, 1974: 79). The cruelty shown to the young Arab shepherd in 'The Prisoner' is outdone by the images of the deportation of women and children from an Arab village in, 'The Story of Hirbet Hizah' which signifies, according to Hever 'the Israeli rejection of Jewish values which, ironically, are then adopted by the Palestinians' (Hever 2002: 114). But it is in the sullen reaction of the oppressed, in both stories, the non-verbalised reactive nationalist reality, in the eyes of the Palestinian refugees that we realise that this war will go on. Speaking of the continued occupation of the West Bank, over forty years after 1948, Yizhar was still the contrarian, opposing the status quo 'Like salt and pepper, the Jewish settlers have sprinkled mines of discord over the West Bank. I cannot forgive them their arrogance and feelings of superiority. The people they are dispossessing are, in their eyes, not human beings who have their own joys and troubles and needs, but black goats that have to be driven off the hills' (Negev 2003: 44).

Amos Oz' *My Michael* (Oz 1972) deals with Jerusalem in the 1950's, a disintegrating marriage and the image of the Arab Other outside the new state, threatening both the state and its inhabitants. In a general comment in her seminal work, *The Arab in Israeli Literature* (Ramras-Rauch, 1989), Gila Ramras-Rauch concludes, with respect to Oz's fiction 'Certainly, it is not political in the narrow sense of ideology and indoctrination. Rather, it is concerned with the far-reaching malaise in Israeli society, a malaise shaped by many factors, not the least of which is the Arab presence' (Ramras-Rauch 1989: 150). *My Michael* deals with the enemy at the gate, after the founding of the new state; *Fima* (Oz 1993) is written in the white heat of the first Intifada and dares to express the hope for a Palestinian state, side by

side with the State of Israel. The Arab twins who were the heroine Hannah's friends, during the pre-state period, in *My Michael*, are now re-imagined as irredentists, preparing for *al-Awdah*, with their own right-of-return in mind. The contrast between the 'then' of the forties and the 'now' of the fifties, comes across as clearly in Oz's autobiographical *A Tale of Love and Darkness* (Oz 2004), which depicts less a lotus-eating than a coffee-drinking Arab-Jewish interface, before the foundation of the state.

Ramras-Rauch cites Hannah's Freudian nightmare from *My Michael* to show how the Palestinian Other has entered the subconscious of the young Israeli woman

> ...a pair of strong, grey wolves...Azis drew out of the folds of his robe a long, glinting knife. There was a gleam in his eyes. He sank down on all fours. His eyes were blazing. The whites of his eyes were dirty and bloodshot. I retreated and pressed my back against the cellar wall. The wall was filthy. A sticky, putrid moisture soaked through my clothes and touched my skin. With my last strength, I screamed (Ramras-Rauch 1989: 157-158).

If the Palestinian is within the heart, in *My Michael*, and within the mind in Oz's *Fima*, he is within the gates itself, in A.B. Yehoshua's *The Lover (*Yehoshua 1978*)*. It is a long way from the early critique of Yehoshua voiced in Mordechai Shalev's scathing review, 'The Arabs as a Literary Solution' (Shalev 1970), which seems to deride the presence of the Arab within Israeli literature.

The tracks of the Palestinian Other are clearly visible in the work of A.B. Yehoshua, from the short story *Facing the Forests* (Yehoshua, 1968; 1988), through *The Lover* (Yehoshua, 1978) to *The Liberated Bride* (Yehoshua, 2001) and *A Woman of Jerusalem* (Yehoshua, 1999), a novel written during the al-Aksa Intifada and which deals with the repatriation of a foreign worker killed in a suicide bombing. The reality of the Palestinian within, however, is best captured in *The Lover*, a multi-layered, multi-voice narrative which gives what is probably the

profoundest view of the Palestinians within Israel, in Israeli literature, outside of David Grossman's non-fiction work, *Sleeping on a Wire* (1992). When the young Galilean Palestinian, Naim, comes to stay with the Israeli grandmother of the young Israel girl, Dafi, even languages become territorial.

תגידי לי מה את רוצה ואני אעשה במקומך Tell me what you want and I'll do it for you

היא חייכה בפה חסרת שיניים שלה She smiled with that toothless mouth of hers

انت صحيح ولد طيب אנת צחיח וולד טייב You're really a good boy (Arabic)

אבל אני לא רציתי ששוב תתחיל בערבית ואמרתי לה ישר But I didn't want her to start up again in Arabic and I said straight to her

את יכולה לדבר אלי עברית את לא צריכה להתאמץ You can speak Hebrew to me…don't strain yourself (Yehoshua 1977: 255)

The socio-linguistic joke, of course, is that for the majority of the Israeli Jewish population, Arabic is a placental barrier too far. For Palestinians within Israel, socio-linguistic *Realpolitik* demands that they know the language of the Other. In this respect, young Naim's use of Hebrew, the language of the enemy, after all, subverts the political asymmetry inherent in the situation.

The reality of the violence of the *al-Aksa* Intifada is a strong presence in Orly Castel-Bloom's novel *Human Parts* (Castel-Bloom 2003). Along with the chilling presence of suicide bombings, the motif of 'the Saudi Virus' (Islamic fundamentalism?) is waiting in the wings. 'The lynching (of the two Israeli reservists) in Ramallah were, for me, the trigger for connecting the Intifada with my book…I couldn't, as a writer, fly from the reality anymore, without losing my

integrity' (Castel-Bloom, 2003). In this respect, the writing of Orly-Castel Bloom's novel can be said to be *reactive nationalist* in origin: an attempt to respond to a situation of ongoing threat, at a national level.

The Novel and Reactive Nationalism

Reactive nationalism is a sub-set of nationalism which manifests itself more in terms of action than ideology. Because it is non-programmatic in nature, its expression tends not only to be unpredictable but also, by and large, undocumented. Nevertheless, certain forms such as oral records, memoirs and, in the case of this discussion, the novel, are well suited for representing this form of nationalism.

The phenomenon of reactive nationalism is present in both the Irish and Israeli-Palestinian situations. In the case of Northern Ireland, the recent conflict should be seen more in terms of reactive nationalism than standard nationalism. In the Israeli-Palestinian case, despite the 'push' factors apparent in the late 19th century Jewish migrations to Palestine from the Russian Pale of Settlement and beyond, Zionism, as Jewish Nationalism, should be seen in the tradition of classic European nationalism. Palestinian nationalism, on the other hand, like Northern Irish Nationalism (Republicanism), is fundamentally reactive in nature. As with Northern Irish Republicanism, ideology follows action, in the Palestinian case. This could hardly be otherwise, given the fractured nature of Palestinian society, in the post-1948 situation.

As has been shown, the representation of reactive nationalism is apparent in earlier examples of Irish, Israeli and Palestinian novels. These manifestations reveal attempts to come to grips with threat, at many levels. The focus of the discussion below, therefore, will be on the representation of reactive nationalism in more recent

Irish, Israeli and Palestinian novels and the nature of that representation, with respect to the tropes of land, language, religion, the image of the enemy and language.

Chapter 2

Land as Language

Same People, Same Place

-But do you know what a nation means? says John Wyse.
-Yes, says Bloom.
-What is it? says John Wyse.
-A nation? says Bloom. A nation is the same people living in the same place.
- By God, then, says Ned, laughing, if that's so I'm a nation for I'm living in the same place for the past five years.

(Joyce 1984: 329-30)

The fauvist painter, Henri Rousseau's carnivalesque canvas, 'The Representatives of Foreign Powers Coming to greet the Republic as a Sign of Peace' was first exhibited in Paris, in 1907. The painting depicts a selection of foreign potentates paying obeisance to French domestic, foreign and colonial power. Among the flags visible, are those of Germany, Italy and Spain. Those leaders whose skin is of a whiter hue are foregrounded. A number of darker-skinned figures have been placed in the background, along with an Arab leader, in *jalabiya*. The Arab, at once peripheral and prominent, lurking on the fringes like a whispered reproach, represents the intrusion into the French consciousness of the *Pied-Noir* polity in the alien lands of French North Africa. Joyce's text, written a few short years later, expresses similar concerns, albeit on a smaller scale, in Ireland: the relationship between nation, sovereignty, citizenship and, most of all, land. Ireland is on the cusp of breaking away from the British Empire - the first nation to do so -

while Palestine is just about to be embraced by that same empire. Land is about to change hands. It is the moment when possession, settlement and plantation become synonymous. Because tenure of land, as the pre-requisite for homeland, is now the issue. But there is one minor problem: the Arab notable frowning in the background-and one major problem: *the same people living in the same place.*

The Centrality of Land in Nationalist Conflicts

I have lived in important place, times
When great events were decided, who owned
That half a rood of rock, a no-man's land
Surrounded by our pitchfork-armed claims.
I heard the Duffys shouting 'Damn your soul!'
And old McCabe stripped to the waist, seen
Step the plot defying blue cast-steel-
'Here is the march along these iron stones.'
That was the year of the Munich bother. Which
Was more important? I inclined
To lose my faith in Ballyrush and Gortin
Till Homer's ghost came whispering to my mind.
He said: I made the Iliad from such
A local row. Gods make their own importance.

-Epic, Patrick Kavanagh.

The essential images of the irredentist and the invader, are very much one and the same: a man or woman clambering furtively over a fence, at dead of night. When land is taken or threatened, reaction is inevitable. When this is further underpinned with ideology, irredentism ensues. Land, not surprisingly therefore, is the fulcrum about which the Israeli-Palestinian and British-Irish conflicts revolve. Nationalism may well be the love-child of mid-19th century European romanticism (Kedourie 1993) and it may well be a function of the top-down designs of elites (○Anderson 1991), but to ignore the centrality of land in the two conflicts under

Land seizure, therefore, as the wellspring of agrarian violence, in the first generation of conflict, becomes the biggest bargaining chip at the post-conflict negotiating table, many years later. Thus, the pattern of Palestinian attacks on Israeli towns and settlements, in the immediate post-1948 era, parallels the 17th century 'Tory/Raparee' phase in the Ulster conflict, after the plantation (Bardon 1992: 137). This is mirrored in later 19th century agrarian, anti-settler/Protestant violence in South Armagh and, later still, in the nineteen eighties campaign of the Provisional I.R.A. against the only sons of Protestant landowners, in the same area. The emergence of organized resistance groups, the development of a nationalist (i.e., anti-settler) ideology and a programme for the emergent state take place *after the fact* of settlement. Land is the eternal, elemental expression of national sovereignty and what might, at a pinch, be called ethnic dignity. Peoples may be overlooked; land rarely is.

Sovereignty, citizenship and land-related identity have their paradoxes too. Though, in the 1990's, Palestinians within Israel, in the Umm al-Fahm area, on the 'Palestinian' side of the main road north to Megiddo, baulked at the idea of inclusion, by means of land-swap, in what, behind closed doors, they perceived as the ramshackle, authoritarian Palestinian state, this did not mean that they were any happier with the status quo within the State of Israel, as less than first class citizens. Although Northern Irish Catholics, under the British system, had a better deal than their southern counterparts, vis-à-vis social welfare and housing this, in the long run, did not sublimate the sense of alienation that dispossession - or the muddled memory of it - and active discrimination brought. The Irish southern borderlands

writer, Pat McCabe has mentioned how some of his northern relatives derived great pleasure, in the sixties, from slipping south of the border to look at their co-religionists' economically backward state.[1] The Israeli writer, David Grossman, remarks on a similar phenomenon, pre-Intifada, of Israeli Palestinians looking down on their separated brethren across the 'Green Line' (Grossmann 1992). Grossman also observed that the less than flattering sobriquet '*dafawwin*' (lit. 'bankers', i.e., from the Occupied West Bank), used to refer to those living on Eastern side of the Green Line, dropped in popularity when the first Intifada kicked in.

17th Century Northern Catholics may never have been kings in their own parlour, as Republican rhetoric would have had them believe, anymore than Palestinian peasants of the Western Galilee were, but the memory, real or imagined, of dispossession, coupled with ongoing elements of second-class citizenship, detracts from dignity. *Imagined Communities* aside, dignity deferred is conflict referred and this is as true in the Galilee as in Northern Ireland.

Land in the Israeli and Palestinian Conflict: לרשת (to inherit)

The religious substratum of Zionism is conditioned, in no small way, by texts which relate to land occupation such as the Books of Joshua, Judges and Deuteronomy. Here, inheritance acquisition of the land - *to inherit* (לרשת)in the Hebrew coinage - and the working of the land are central concepts. Although a repository of early Jewish law, Deuteronomy or, more importantly, its recensions, may be looked on as a literary title-deed. None of this takes from the very real sense of the 'sanctity of the land' evident in early Zionist writings. *Haaretz*, 'the Land', a

[1] Personal communication

In the Zionist phase, post second aliya, land and language are complementary constructs of the emergent 'new Hebrew' nation. Early Zionists were quite blunt about the centrality of land in the whole project. Ussishkin, in 1904, stated the facts thus

> In order to establish Jewish autonomy - or to be more exact, a Jewish state in Palestine -it is first of all essential that all the land of Palestine, or at least most of it, be the property of Jewish people. Without the right of land ownership, Palestine will never be Jewish regardless of the number of Jews in it, both in the city and in the country...But how is land ownership customarily achieved? Only in one of the following three ways: by force-that is, through conquest in war (or, in other words, by stealing land from its owners); by compulsion-that is, through government expropriation of land; and by voluntary sale on the part of the owners. Which of these three ways is appropriate in our case? The first way is out of the question, for we are too weak for this method. Thus, we can speak only of the second and third ways. (Yazbak 1999: 43)

The contention that Palestinian nationalism developed independently of Zionism, pace Khalidi (Khalidi 1997) is unlikely, in the extreme. While the anti-colonial movements throughout the Middle East - in particular in Iraq and Egypt - definitely asserted an influence on a developing sense of Palestinian identity, the gradual encroachment of Jewish settlements ('facts on the ground', in later Israeli parlance) in British Mandate Palestine provided the clear catalyst for the growth of

what reactive nationalism at the level of land ownership i.e., a nationalism based on *reaction* to dispossession or the threat of same.

While ethnic and religious components fomented the 1929 riots - the '*Haram al-Sharif* riots' - it is clear that the 'tipping-point' had already been reached where both Palestinian elites and Palestinian *fellahin* had suddenly become fearful of mass Jewish immigration and what this would mean in terms of loss of land. The same 'tipping-point' effect is seen in the Irish situation, albeit three hundred years earlier, in 1641, when the native Irish massacred English/Scottish settlers in Ulster, resulting in the dispatch of Oliver Cromwell to set matters straight. It is interesting to contrast the 'transfer' of land in both the Irish case, some three hundred years earlier (Bartlett 1989) and the Israeli – Palestinian case (Farsoun & Zacharia 1997: 79).

By way of contrast, however, it should be noted that the relative lack of irredentist pressures on Northern Ireland, immediately after partition, had as much to do with the incipient civil war in what was then known as the Irish Free State (i.e., what would become the Republic of Ireland) as anything else(Garvin 1996: 184). In Israel, in the wake of the Six Day War of 1967, messianic settler nationalism took hold in the occupied territories and the period of settlement building began anew (Ravitsky 1993). Here again, admittedly in a different form, Deuteronomic imperatives came into play and the sense of 'divinely endowed right' was asserted (Shimoni 1995: 334). The ramifications of the 'first withdrawal' from Gaza are still being worked out as are the implications for possible future withdrawals from the West Bank and the Golan Heights.

Land in the Republican and Loyalist Traditions

The 16th and 17th century plantations of Ireland differ in style and substance from the earlier Anglo-Norman conquest of the 12th and 13th centuries. The plantation of Laois/Offaly, in the south midlands, and south Munster - Kerry and Cork - differ again from the later plantation of Ulster, in the early 17th century. The plantation of Ulster comes on the heels of the collapse of the old Gaelic order, at Kinsale, in 1603, the 'Flight of the Earls' (when the remnants of native Gaelic aristocracy fled), the punitive Cromwellian campaign, after the 1641 Irish native rebellion and the rise of Calvinism, through John Knox, in Scotland. With the plantation of Ulster, in the early 17th century, we notice a phenomenon that holds true, more or less, to this day: the majority of the inhabitants East of the Bann river (i.e., facing Scotland), are Protestant (and particularly Scottish Presbyterian origin) while the majority west of the Bann are Catholic.

This form of migration into Antrim and Down, the counties east of the Bann, transformed the demography of the area overnight.

> Before 1603, Ulster had been a cohesive, independent bastion of Celtic culture. A decade later, the province was characterized by a tripartite social division. One segment was the native Irish who had, until 1603, owned almost all the land and who had lived according to political and social customs that antedated the Norman invasion. These people were suddenly transformed into the lowest of tenantry. They held only the poorest land...the second group was lowland Scots. The Scots dominated the counties of Antrim and Down, which they independently colonized, and among the planted colonies they were the majority of colonists in Donegal and Tyrone and a portion in Fermanagh and Cavan. The Scots were Presbyterians. The Third group was English...the great majority of English colonists were Anglicans. Thus, the early seventeenth century saw the formation of the social structure that characterizes Ulster to the present day. (Akenson 1992: 106-107).

The divide between rural I.R.A. members and urban - Belfast and Derry/Londonderry - members was most noticeable at the sectarian level. Urban working-class paramilitary vengeance related, initially, to real or perceived socio-economic discrimination. In the rural areas, the concept of 'the Fourth Green Field'- the land of Ulster 'stolen' by the Protestant planters - featured greatly in Republican mythology. Protestant paramilitary ideology, in line with Deuteronomistic notions of inheriting the land from the unworthy natives, took the tack that the Catholics were, of essence, a fifth column, from the very foundation of the state. Even those in high office weren't immune from expressing sectarian tendencies.

> 'When I made that declaration last 'twelfth' I did so after careful consideration. What I said was justified. I recommended people not to employ Roman Catholics, who were 99 per cent disloyal.' Sir Basil Brooke, Unionist Party, then Minister of Agriculture, March 1934 later to become Lord Brookeborough and Northern Ireland Prime Minister Quoted in: Commentary upon The White Paper (Cmd.558) entitled 'A Record of Constructive Change' (Brooke: 1971)

Tracking back through time and space then, we find rural dispossession, planter supremacy and ideology-driven expansion mirrored in both the ethos of the new 20th century Northern Irish state and, at ground level, in day-to-day acts of discrimination, with respect to housing and employment, financed, from a distance, by a largely disinterested British government. The Unionist prime minister of Northern Ireland, Terence O'Neill, a liberal by northern Irish standards, found it impossible to assuage his co-religionists' fears, citing what might have been, in other jurisdictions, a condescending paradigm.

> It is frightfully hard to explain to Protestants that if you give Roman Catholics a good job and a good house, they will live like Protestants because they will see neighbours with cars and television sets; they will refuse to have eighteen children. But if a Roman Catholic is jobless, and lives in the most ghastly hovel, he will rear eighteen children on National Assistance. If you treat

> Roman Catholics with due consideration and kindness, they will live like Protestants in spite of the authoritative [sic] nature of their Church. (Belfast Telegraph, 10 May 1969)

Sectarian tensions rose, local defence paramilitary groups were founded and, nationalist and loyalist ideologies were forged white hot in the heat of internecine violence.

It is not unreasonable to suggest here, that the same land-based conflict that mutated into nationalist/loyalist and Catholic/Protestant contretemps in Northern Ireland, finds a simple parallel in the counter-nationalisms of Israel and Palestine and the broader religious Jewish and Muslim contretemps. In this respect, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, following a continuum from agrarian agitation, immediately after dispossession in 1948, through nationalist resistance, from 1964, to Islamist confrontation in the form of the maximalist tendencies of Hamas and Islamic Jihad, is in parallel with the early anti-planter violence in Ulster, that melds into both nationalist and sectarian conflict. The origins of the conflict remain the same, nevertheless: land won and lost.

A.B. Yehoshua: Giving Voice to the Arab Within

Language is land, in A.B. Yehoshua's novel *The Liberated Bride* (2001). Both the internal mappings of the State of Israel and the *realpolitik* vicissitudes of the 1967 Green Line are mirrored in the Hebrew-Arabic nexus represented in the lives of the novel's central characters. It could hardly be otherwise for Haifa, as both the cultural cockpit of the Arab Galilee and the greatest symbol of its fall, in 1948, represents the metropole subtended by the concentric circles of both communal languages (Golan 2003). In an early Yehoshua novel, *The Lover (1978)*, an Israeli Jewish family in Haifa interact, unintentionally, with Palestinian workers

from the villages in the hinterland of Haifa, with dismaying results. It has been identified as the first occasion, in the modern Hebrew novel, where an Arab is allowed to portray an independent inner life (Mintz 1999: 409). By the time we reach the period of the *al-Aksa* Intifada and *The Liberated Bride*, the Palestinian, within Israel, is speaking in his own language, dialect and register. That is to say, language now predicates presence.

The diglossic interface between majority/minority languages is crucial to the understanding of realities in the State of Israel. The majority of Jewish-Israelis, particularly those of Ashkenazi origin, are unlikely to understand, at any significant level, either Arabic *fusha* (literary Arabic) or *'ammiyya (colloquial Arabic).* And there lies the rub in such relationships: the chambermaid always knows more about the master than the master does about the chambermaid. In *The Liberated Bride*, Rivlin, a Jewish Israeli professor of Arabic in Haifa university is supervising the thesis of a young Palestinian-Israeli woman, Samaher, from a Galilee village who, seemingly, is suffering from a psychosomatic illness. At the same time, he is pursuing his own academic hunt-the-thimble in trying to pin down the causes of the rise in Islamic extremism in Algeria in the light of written 'warnings' from previous generations. Overshadowing the story is the half-completed research project of another Israeli Jewish orientalist, Suissa, killed in a suicide bombing and the peregrinations of an elderly couple of oriental scholars, the Tedeschis. Rivlin's engagement with the Arab world may be academic but, as he is drawn into both the realities of village life in the Galilee hinterland and the Occupied Territories, he floats and flits between these borders with the good grace of the perplexed. In the Galilee village of Mansura, he is an object of somewhat suppressed amusement.

> He gave her a suspicious, pitying look. Expecting a child, he told himself, as though he had lately become an expert on false pregnancies, she was not. It looked more like a case of depression.
> 'You really came.' She blushed and smiled wanly. 'Thank you. Thank you, Professor, for coming to your village.'
> 'Sad'uni,' he said, addressing not only Afifa and the grandmother, who had followed him into the room, but the women outside in the hallway. 'I've been teaching at the university for thirty years and this is my first house call. Bil sihha ow marid.'
> *'Tiwafakt bil'aml es-saleh.'*
> '*Allah yibarek fik.*' (Yehoshua 2001: 175)

Rashid, the Palestinian-Israeli chauffeur and 'gofor', in *The Liberated Bride*, is just such a go-between and crosses over and back between Israeli and the P.A. with relative ease. His homeland is a many-tongued one. For such Palestinian-Israelis, living within what is essentially the triglossic Venn diagram of Hebrew, Arabic *fusha* and Palestinian *'ammiyya*, are linguistic shape-shifters who have learned to accommodate land to language.

The realities of 1947 and 1948 have been embossed on their consciousnesses by the redrawing of linguistic borders, internally and externally. Everyone is watching everyone else. Palestinian-Israelis are watching their fellow Jewish citizens; Jewish-Israelis are watching them, through a complex linguistic picket fence and with the help of Israeli orientalists (many of Rivlin's graduates end up in the security forces), *Mizrachim* Israeli Jews of Arab origin or Palestinian-Israeli proxies, such as the Druze. Language as border, in the reality represented in *The Liberated Bride* is, at all times, subject to the contingencies of time and place.

The *souterrain* of A.B. Yehoshua's novel conceals a further sombre twist: a tale of incest concealed, even at the end of the novel, from Rivlin, and presided over by the scion of a Palestinian-Israeli family. Deep in the bowels of a Jerusalem hotel, a long-running family secret destroys the marriage of Rivlin's son, Ofer. Like the Palestinian-Israelis, we are privileged to know what Rivlin's caste may not: the

secret, subterranean underbelly of the state. Rivlin's son, Ofer, will never reveal the sordid secret of his in-law's family, out of fidelity to his ex-wife, and Rivlin will never know the true cause of his son's failed marriage. Any more than he will learn the true causes of the rise in Islamic extremism in Algeria by abstract accounts of events from earlier generations. Rivlin, the orientalist, despite his linguistic competency and his ability to segue into the society of the Arab villages of the Haifa hinterland, will always remain just outside the loop.

It was ever so. Now A.B. Yehoshua has expressed artistically what it is too early to express politically: Palestinian-Israelis, at one-fifth of the population, are an ethnic minority and that some sort of territorial autonomy is just around the corner.

Pat McCabe: Róisín Dubh as Transvestite Border Queen

The psychologically disenfranchised worlds of the young Francie Brady in *The Butcher Boy* (McCabe 1993) and the burnt-out schoolteacher, Raphael Bell in *The Dead School* (McCabe 1996) purvey a landscape of deep, if comical, despair and a morbid sense of personal and societal downgoing. With the move to *Breakfast on Pluto* (McCabe 1998), however, McCabe presents us with a character - the small-town transvestite Patrick 'Pussy' Braden - who, in Joyce's terms, 'flies by those nets' and glides past both economic and political snares to personal liberation. All three McCabe novels have much in common. Not least of these is the conflict between the political and the personal. Between geographical determinism and personal history. For nothing moves within the early novels of Patrick McCabe, from *Carn* (McCabe 1989; 1993) through *The Butcher Boy* to *Breakfast on Pluto*, without reference to the borderlands of South Ulster. The chronotope of time and space that situates much of the respective novels in South Ulster is crucial to the

narratives. In McCabe's world, there is no time without place. The local is the locus.

In the early seventies, special maps of Belfast city were provided for the British Army, Royal Ulster Constabulary, social services and other 'interested parties' which showed - down to street level - the sectarian distribution of the city's population. It was possible, therefore, for a visitor, of whatever hue, to know into which religious fiefdom he/she was travelling by reference to the map-coded Orange for Protestant, Green for Catholic and a neutral colour for the neutral-and more middle-class areas. A similar - if unthinkable - map of a modern British city might show clusters of Kurdish refugees, Pakistani second-generation immigrants and British of West Indian origin. The problem with such maps is always obvious enough: despite the overall internecine reality on the ground, borders can shift, making the sectarian map untrustworthy, at the interfaces.

Clones town, in particular, the hometown of the writers Patrick and Eugene McCabe, though not as variegated as northern counties like Armagh and Tyrone, has a predominantly Catholic population with a Protestant admixture, remnants of the Plantation of Ulster. For Patrick 'Pussy' Braden, the unter-hero Pat McCabe's *Breakfast on Pluto* (1998), is a double alien: indifferent to the great burden of Republican irredentism and challenged, at a personal identity level, by his orientation. It is this liminality that provides the narrative tension of the novel. McCabe's eponymous hero finds more relief in the mythologies of Hollywood and popular music than in the mythical/mystical romance of Republican rhetoric.

Using the touchstone of the 1966 fiftieth anniversary commemorations of the 1916 Rising, McCabe's narrative finds wings in the tormented years of the early seventies. Pivotal events, explicitly or implicitly alluded to provide political

navigation points: Bloody Sunday (1972), the London bombings and a black parody of the Balcombe Street gang, an active service unit of the I.R.A. that held London to ransom in the mid-seventies. The difference in McCabe's narrative has to do with the conflict micromanaged at local, South Ulster level. This isn't the conflict of car bombs, sniping attacks and random sectarian kidnappings and assassinations on rain-sodden Belfast streets. The skewed hinterland of *Breakfast on Pluto* is a much more intimate, rural one. The gentleman driving the red Massey Ferguson tractor by day, may well be the same person slipping north over the border, by night, to 'take out' a British army patrol with a land mine or kill an Ulster Defence Regiment reservist or policeman. Close readers of recent Irish history will find plenty of resonances in the murders McCabe glosses.

> As was plainly evident only some nights later (not long after the young McCarville fellow came sailing down the river roped to a mattress with a six-inch nail hammered into his head and it had been decided something needed to be done) when the Horse Kinnane and Jackie Timlin called for him and they drove off to stiff old Anderson and his son. Who both conveniently happened to be in the library spraying food onto some exotic plant or other when the three masked desperadoes burst in. Nutting the old chap proved no problem but his son (albeit he was fifty years of age) fought tooth and nail. Almost escaped, indeed, before the Horse managed to get between him and the door, knocking him to his knees and shouting: 'Do him! Do him, Kerr, you bollocks you!'
> As Irwin stood there pissing himself-he really did, as anyone with an eye in their head could see from the gathering map on the crotch of his trousers, and being so far away in some other place that eventually Jackie had to push him out of the way, snatch the gun from his hand and put three in your man's head. 'You stupid fucker, Kerr! You stupid dithering little fuck! What do you think this is? What do you think this is?' (McCabe 1998: 81-82)

The conflict, at local level, seems even dirtier because it is more intimate. McCabe glosses certain well-known incidents, such as the killing of three off-duty British soldiers, in March 1971, who had been lured to their death by a couple of Republican sirens (McCabe 1998: 98-100). But it is not all one-sided. The matter of

the possible complicity of members of the British government's Ulster Defence Regiment in certain rural sectarian assassinations in the 1970's and 1980's - still a grey area to this day - is mentioned in *Breakfast on Pluto*. These were calculated to strike a balance of terror between the opposing forces (Geraghty 1998).The sort of bog-road ambush, with false police/army checkpoints favoured by Protestant paramilitaries gets an airing too. We are in the same tough, sectarian territory as another local McCabe, Eugene, who, writing contemporaneously and very locally, in the mid-seventies, in his short story *Cancer*, tells the grim tale of an uncle and son, both Catholics, who have crossed into the North to visit a relative in hospital. On the backroads of Fermanagh, they stop by a local 'Protestant' pub, where an off-duty police reservist is in his cups.

> Dinny nudged Boyle and winked up at a notice pinned to a pillar. Boyle read:
> *Lisnaskea and District Development Association*
> *Extermination of Vermin*
> *1/- for each magpie killed*
> *2/- for each grey crow killed.*
> *10/' for each grey squirrel killed.*
> *1 pound for each fox killed*
> Underneath, someone had printed with a biro:
> *For every Fenian Fucker: one old penny.*
> As the woman measured the whiskies a glass smashed in the snug at the counter end. A voice jumped the frosted glass: 'Wilson was a fly boy, and the Heath man's no better, all them Tories is tricky whores, dale with Micks and Papes and lave us here to rot. Well, by Christ, they'll come no Pope to the townland of Invercloon, I'll not be blown up or burned out, I'll fight to the last ditch.'
> All listening in the outer bar, faces, secret and serious, uncomfortable now, as other voices joined: 'You're right, George.'
> 'Sit down man, you'll toss the table.'
> 'Let him say out what's in his head.'
> 'They'll not blow me across the bog; if it's blood they want then, by Jasus they'll get it, all they want of it, gallons of it, wagons, shiploads.'
> 'Now you're talking, George.' (McCabe 2005: 80)

This is bog-bitterness, the Orange mirror image of the I.R.A.'s own campaign to ethnically cleanse the rural areas of South Ulster of Protestants, by assassination and intimidation. It is a long way from the lofty rhetoric of Republican and Loyalist ideologues.

The hero/heroine of McCabe's novel, Patrick 'Pussy' Braden (AKA 'Kitten') is born the son of a preacher man in the small border town of Tyreelin and taken in, for a financial consideration, by a local woman. Conflicts with authority abound, naturally enough, when Kitten's transvestite 'tendency' is revealed. But it is in Kitten's subversion of the nationalist narrative that McCabe's ghoulish humour comes through. The saccharine, sanctimonious nationalist rhetoric of the early seventies is well-encapsulated in a series of republican records produced in South Armagh and bought by local supporters. 'The Sniper's Lament', 'Provo Lullaby' and 'My Dear Old Armalite' being among the quainter specimens of the stock.

> *O, Mama dear*
> *I know it has to be*
> *I know these awful things have got to be*
> *O, Mama dear*
> *When freedom has been won*
> *Oh, mama dear,*
> *I'll put away my gun*

It is not hard to see the ironic interface between Dr. Freud of Vienna and Country-and-Western kitsch nationalism. This is real Pat McCabe territory. When Kitten is accidentally implicated in a bombing in a London disco frequented by soldiers, his politics and orientation come under scrutiny.

> Even more so when in the hospital they discovered her little secret, Puss of course not doing an absolute thing to explain the situation, not even bothering to raise a blackened (well, actually it wasn't-that is a bit fanciful-as Terence duly spotted!) finger and say: 'No! You don't quite get it! You see, what I am is an ordinary transvestite prostitute, not the slightest bit interested in politics at all! Far too worried about her lovely ice-cream pink mohair

> sweater and gorgeous black pleated mini-skirt to be even bothered, in fact. (McCabe 1998: 142-143)

But indifference only gets her so far. A bruising encounter with the law - clear references here to the miscarriages of justice in the Guildford Four and Birmingham Six cases - ends with Pussy being released, when her interrogators realise that someone of her orientation is scarcely likely to be a hardened terrorist. This is the saving of Pussy. Because she is able to swan across gender borders, she is no threat to the established sectarian order in her border town. She is equally despised by both Loyalist and Republican purists. When Kitten's small-town Provo buddy Irwin is killed by the I.R.A. for informing, Kitten takes refuge in the heartland of hope - the anonymity of 1970's London. Kitten will never find her lost mother, Ireland is scarcely going to be united in her lifetime, but there is always Dior and Chanel no. 5 to soften the post-colonial pain of existence. McCabe's sustained snigger at the inanities of nationalistic two-dimensional thinking, as embodied in Patrick 'Pussy' 'Kitten' Braden is grounded, ultimately, in the belief that the dignity of the individual is worth any amount of irredentist rhetoric and terrorist cant.

Yayhia Yakhlif: Establishing the Borders of the State

War, as a complementary strategy to land purchase, ultimately fixed the post-1948 borders of the new State of Israel. What individual purchasers started and, subsequently, the Jewish National Fund continued, by acquiring such enormous lots as the Sarsuq holdings in Marj Ibn 'Amr/ Yizrael Valley, the Haganah and the new Israeli Army would complete (Khalidi 1997: 188). To fend

> ...to gain control of the area allotted to the Jewish State and defend its borders and those of the blocs of Jewish settlements and such Jewish populations as were outside those borders, against a regular or pararegular enemy operating from bases outside or inside the area of the Jewish State (Bar-Zohar 1973: 147)

The Galilee was at the heart of this campaign, having a large number of Arab towns and villages scattered over a wide area. Despite the toing and froing of both Palestinian forces and Iraqi, Syrian and Jordanian forces, the Israeli forces had taken effective control of the Galilee by the end of October 1948 (Nazzal 1978: 27). Six months after the declaration of the State of Israel, the state's new boundaries had been set and a new balance between the Jewish and Arab population had been reached. The domino effect of the fall of larger Arab towns had been augmented by the careful use of rumour. Hirst cites Yigal Allon's (leader of the Palmach) own words.

> I gathered all the Jewish Mukhtars, who have contact with Arabs in different villages, and asked them to whisper in the ears of some Arabs, that a great Jewish reinforcement has arrived in Galilee and that it is going to burn all of the villages of the Huleh. They should suggest to these Arabs, as their friends, to escape while there is still time. And the rumour spread in all the areas of the Huleh that it is time to flee. The flight numbered myriads...thanks to the local offensive war, the continuity of the Jewish territories was accomplished and also the penetrating of our forces into Arab areas. The Arab flight which reached great numbers made it easer on our forces to supervise vast areas and was a burden to the enemy who had to put all of its efforts into the absorption and organisation of refugees. It is easy to imagine the spirit of defeat that the refugees took with them to the Arab areas. (Hirst 1977: 130)

Although this phase reflects the official end of the Israeli War of Independence as such, the compound image of flight-and-fight, and the contrast between the

decimated Palestinian forces on the one hand and the relatively ineffective Arab armies, is the backdrop against which Yahyia Yakhlif's novel *A Lake Beyond the Wind* (2003) is played out. It is a novel tinged with melancholia, foreboding, betrayal and, ultimately, dispossession. The railway town of Samakh, on the southern shores of the Sea of Galilee and at the base of the Golan Heights, forms the geocentre of the novel.

In Yakhlif's novel, we watch the world of Palestinian towns and villages collapse, through the eyes of the young Palestinian, Radi, and the Iraqi volunteer in the Arab Liberation Army, Abd al-Rahman. The pastoral image of Samakh depicted in the novel tallies with shots taken before its eventual fall and destruction. When the real fighting starts it will, inevitably in the situation in the Galilee, pit Palestinian town and village against Jewish settlement-a war of land. The attack on the settlement of Tirat Zevi represents the first serious military encounter in the novel. The attack is a disaster for the Arab forces: by the end of April 1948, the town of Samakh itself will be abandoned (Morris 2004: 132). The chaos, lack of leadership and military incompetence on the Palestinian side, referred to by later Palestinian historians (Khalidi 2008: 12-36) is evident in the build-up to the battle. Also evident is the hubris engendered by such leaders as the Circassian Ahmed Bey. This coupled with the almost mystical belief in the properties of an armoured vest inherited from the British - a tidy little political trope - ensures a rout, when siege is laid to the Jewish settlement of Tirat Zevi. Asad al-Shahba, a Syrian volunteer, relates the grim news.

> 'The attack on Tirat Zevi', he said, 'started at three in the morning. We encircled it from three directions. It's a fortification, not just a settlement-it's surrounded by watch towers, barbed wire and trenches.'
> 'When the Jews sensed we were getting ready for the attack, they opened their water pipes and flooded the fields, so they turned into

> a swamp. We didn't have the tanks to get across...it was eight-thirty in the morning when the failed attack ended. With my own eyes, I saw the corpses strewn all over the swamp, in all directions. And with my own eyes I saw Ahmed Bey withdraw before we did, running off after his car had got stuck in the mud' (Yakhlif 2003: 36-37)/

Criticism of the leadership sidles into the narrative. This is contrasted with the more positive references to Palestinian military leaders such as al-Qawuqji (active in the area of the Galilee), al-Husseini (killed in battle near Kastel) and Fawzi al-Qutub. The sense of a people abandoned, to a very great extent, by its leaders is palpable. The Iraqi fighter, Abd al-Rahman, voices his criticisms in a secret diary.

> Oh, Abd al-Rahman bin Kazam, how utterly tired I am of all those discussions, going on all year long, between the intellectuals, the gentlemen and the educated people in the cafes of al-Rashid Street, and between the two underground parties with their burning support for the nationalist struggle. Newspapers, broadcasts, debates-newspaper talk. Night talk wiped out by the day. Could anything possibly mean more than what I've done? (Yakhlif 2003: 55)

A later attack, under al-Qawuqji, on Mishmar ha-Emek, fails. Jaffa, Safad, Beisan, Acre, Tiberias and other large centres of Palestinian population are now under threat. 'Plan D' begins in earnest..

> 'People are leaving the town,' Hafiza said. 'What are you going to do?'
> Haj Hussein thought for a moment.
> 'If things get much worse,' he said, 'we could move the women and children, and the old people, to the outlying areas. To al-Hawi, maybe, or Tellat al-Duweir, or al-Tawafiq, or even al-Hammeh.'
> Then, looking up at her, he said:
> 'We must hold out for another two weeks, Hafiza, until the Arab armies come.'
> Hafiza was brave and stout-hearted, but she knew well enough that, with Tiberias fallen, the road to Samakh was open...the refugees who come to Samakh from Tiberias had started moving on to al-Hammeh and al-Adsiyyeh, even east to Jordan. The cows

> and other animals roamed about among the houses, because the shepherds and herdsmen hadn't come to take them out to pasture. (Yakhlif 2003: 199-200)

The pastoral idyll that was Samakh is no more. The flight has started. When the refugees halt, for a night or a lifetime, the remembering begins. Towns, villages and lands, now vacated. The remembering will start now: towns, villages and lands. The land will stay the same but now name and nation will be changed. It has long been argued that the project of naming place was a central element of the new Hebrew culture that emerged in Palestine and that came to dominate Israeli society, particularly in the first two decades of statehood. It was, in large part, through this 'territorial ethos' that the new national culture would distinguish itself from the 'exilic' culture of Diaspora Jews (El-Haj 2001: 16-17).

Said Kashua: The Anomie Within

The Palestinian poet Mahmud Darwish points up the profound relationship between land and language in a comment on the influence of Israeli Hebrew on his own childhood. It is, oddly enough, remarkably devoid of the bitterness one might expect to encounter.

> Hebrew...does not signify for me the language of the occupier, because it was the language of love and friendship...It opened for me the door to European literature...It is the language of my childhood memories. When I read in Hebrew, I remember the land; Hebrew brings back the landscape (Sen 2004)

Anton Shammas, the Palestinian-Israeli writer (working in both Hebrew and Arabic) and academic, is clear about the connection between language and polity:

> I think the main achievement of Zionism...the greatest achievement and the only one, is the reterritorializing of the Hebrew language. The rest of the Zionist enterprise is a mute question. But I think its only achievement was to reterritorialize

> Hebrew to this particular territory...and reinvent the language...by reterritorializing the Palestinian vernacular of Palestine...what happened in 1948 was to deterritorialize the Palestinian vernacular...so the problem is that for Palestinians in Israel, identity is not constructed by the people themselves, it is imposed on them. (Caspi & Weltsch 1998: 30-31)

The Zionist movement, with its slogan the 'land for a people for a people without a land' in effect provided a language for a people for a people without a language, i.e., a common mother-tongue. The Palestinian writer, Ghassan Kanafani, in his *Literature of Resistance in Occupied Palestine, 1948-1966* (1966), acknowledges the centrality of language in both the creation of identity and, subsequently, literature (Harlow 1987: 3). This continuity is further pointed up by current commentators, viewing the development of the Palestinian novel to the late nineties (Taha 2002: 29). The question - which language should a Palestinian writer use? and its answer, Arabic - seem obvious enough. And such is the case, by and large, for the majority of Palestinian writers within Israel.

In the case of the Palestinian-Israeli writer, Said Kashua, the reasons for his choice of language - Hebrew - lie buried deep within his first novel, *Dancing Arabs* (Kahsua 2002), an ironic *Bildungsroman* in the tradition of *The Pesoptimist* and *The Good Soldier Schweik*. In as much as Palestinian-Israelis writing in Arabic are writing a minor literature within the majority literature of Arabic, Palestinian Israelis, such as Kashua, are doing the same, but within the relatively new metropolitan majority language of Hebrew. In this respect, Palestinian-Israelis writing in Hebrew, subscribe to the three cornerstones of Deleuze and Guattari's description of minor literatures: they exhibit a high coefficient of deterritorialization, 'everything in them is political' and a collective value is ascribed to everything in the novels of the minor literature (Deleuze and Guattari

1986). From the opening bars, we realize we are knee-deep in irony and nuanced nod-and-wink.

> One morning, after another night when I'd sneaked into her bed because I was too scared to fall asleep, I saw her take the key out of a hidden pocket she'd sewn in one of her pillows. Grandma handed me the key and asked me to take her prayer rug out of the cupboard for her. I leaped out of bed at once. What had come over her? Was she really letting me open the cupboard? I took the key, and as soon as I put it in the lock, Grandma said, 'Turn it gently. Everything is rusty by now.' (Kashua 2002: 3)

The trope of the key to the lost house in Palestine immediately resonates with us. As does the grandmother's statement, later on that *'al-Ard zai al-Ird'* - land is like honour. But Kashua's narrative is not one of translation across borders, in 1948. It is rather one of internal exile, if not refugee status. The narrator realises, early on, that to gain access to information and the greater world outside the village, he must engage with the majority language. He learns about his father's imprisonment for a terrorist offence through Hebrew; his middle and higher education will take place through Hebrew; but he will always be an 'inside outsider.' Reading a novel by the Druze writer, Salman Natur, Kashua's hero wishes himself into its milieu.

> Sometimes, when I am at home, I steal a few of my father's books. I hate reading Arabic, but I owe it to myself to look at those books. To understand why Mahmoud Darwish is considered great, and why Emil Habibi was awarded the Israel Prize. The last book I stole was Hamarat al-Balad by Salman Natour. This young Arab-a poet, maybe, or an author-writes about life in a Tel Aviv pub. He describes all the left-wing Jews, who are really very nice to him. They listen to him with great interest and introduce him to new friends. Pretty young girls sit beside him and sometimes even kiss him. He recalls how at one stage he thought he could blend in completely. I feel like an idiot for even thinking I could blend in too. (Kashua 2002: 106).

There is a poignancy to the narrative that betrays the hurt of a nobody's child, stuck between two cultures. This is not the confident narrative of Anton

Shammas' *Arabesques*, a subversive take on the Israeli state and its myths (Shaked 2000: 186) nor, yet again, the narrative of the *klutz* of a collaborator of Habibi's *The Pesoptimist*. Kashua's central character is more akin to Amos Oz's eponymous Fima, of the novel of the same name, *Fima* (1993), who has internalised the complexities of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict to the extent that his thought processes are scrambled and he is semi-delusional. The ironic tone of the narrative kicks in early.

> Five years later, when I was in fourth grade, the Hebrew teacher came to class with an *ajnabi*, a Westerner, a stranger-blond, tall, good-looking, not like us. The teacher translated the stranger's Hebrew. He was from Seeds of Peace. We were in Seeds of Peace too from now on, and we'd be meeting with Jews. They'd come to us and we'd go to them.
>
> We liked the idea. Jews meant days off from school. And the teachers would behave betters. They wouldn't hit us, and they'd smile all the time. The Jews had more women teachers. We only had one, and she was old. The Jews were coming from Kfar Sava (Kashua 2002: 65).

Slowly, the narrator begins to assimilate to the majority community. The linguistic shibboleth of the Arabic mispronunciation of 'p' is 'ethnically cleansed' first (Kashua 2002: 92). It is a short hop from there to the crux - i.e., the crossover scene - when the young boy, now enrolled as a boarder in a Jewish school for bright students, encounters his old schoolmates on a trip to Wadi Kelt.

> The kids from Tira called out my name, and I pretended not to hear them. 'Hey, look, it's him. Over there, in the shorts,' they said. I passed them by quickly. A few of them said, 'Hi, how're you doing?' and I wanted to dig a hole and hide. I nodded and kept going. Later, when some of the kids asked me if I knew them, I said I didn't. 'But they knew your name,' one of them insisted, and I said it was a common name among Arabs (Kashua 2002: 105).

The narrator has denied himself a number of times now. He imbibes the whole biblical narrative and the ideology of the redemption of the land but is dismayed

when, unlike his fellow Jewish Israeli students, he is exempt from visiting military bases, in preparation for military service.[2] The first overt statement of identity is conveyed by the history teacher, in the local school, in al-Tira. It is couched in customary *Habibi-esque* irony.

> Once, our history teacher in Tira asked if anyone in the class knew what Palestine was, and nobody did, including me. Then he asked contemptuously if any of us had ever seen a Palestinian, and Mohammed the Fatso, who was afraid of having his knuckles rapped, said he'd once been driving with his father in the dark and they'd seen two Palestinians. That day, the history teacher rapped every single one of us on the knuckles, launching his attack with Mohammed the Fatso. He whacked us with his ruler, ranting, 'We are Palestinians, you are Palestinians, I'm a Palestinian! You nincompoops, you animals, I'll teach you who you are! (Kashua 2002: 104).

But self-awareness is still a way down the road. The narrator must first go out into the 'real' world of work. He gains employment as an assistant in a home for disabled children - a job commonly held either by migrant Asian worker or Palestinians - marries and finds himself beached in the south of Jerusalem as the *al-Aksa* Intifada breaks out. Torn between hatred of his father, for insisting that his place is in 'the land' and the desire to flee, the Said Kashua's narrator takes off on the sort of flight-of-political-fancy.

> I'll be a candidate selected by consensus. I'll be a member of the Knesset. The media will love me. They'll find it hard to believe that a Moslem MK can talk like that, without a trace of fanaticism, gently, almost without an accent. I'll express myself well, and I'll represent the views of an entire community. Even the Jews will consider me an honest man. I'll get along very well with the right-wing parties and the ultra-orthodox. I'll become Prime Minister- the first Arab in the Islamic Movement to be made prime minister. I'll bring peace and love to the region. The economy will flourish. There will be no war on the horizon...(Kashua 2002: 172).

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[2] Only Arabs of the Druze community are officially obliged to serve in the Israeli army. See Kaufman, I. (2004). 'Ethnic Affirmations of Ethnic Manipulations: The Case of the Druze in Israel'. *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*. Vol. 9. pp. 53-82, for an account of the development of the relationship between the Druze minority and the Druze majority.

This isn't a million miles away from the hysteria of Fima, in Amos Oz's novel of the same name, set against the background of the first Intifada.

> He himself, wearing a workman's jacket and threadbare trousers, would sit not at the teacher's desk but on the windowsill. He would paint a pitiless picture of the realities, startling the ministers with his portrayal of the impending disaster. Towards dawn, he would secure a majority for a decision to withdraw all our armed forces, as a first step, from the Gaza Strip, even without an agreement. 'If they fire on our settlements, I'll bomb them from the air. But if they keep quiet, if they demonstrate that they are serious about peace, then we'll wait a year or two and open negotiations with them about the future of the West Bank.' (Oz 1993:8)

Oz's 'insane' vision has, of course, come to pass: Israel, driven by the demographic time-bomb, world opinion and Islamist violence, has withdrawn, unilaterally, from Gaza. And bombings 'from the air' are part of the current round of Hamas-Israeli army exchanges.

There are, in Said Kashua's novel, the same Joycean strategies of silence, exile and cunning in operation. By the end of the novel, assimilation, religion or *wasta* are in evidence. Some of the narrator's friends turn to Islam, having forsaken the sunny uplands of nationalist sentiment. The narrator's father, by stealth and cunning, is co-opted into the Israeli civil establishment as a minor functionary, all the time keeping well in with the P.A. The narrator assimilates to the majority community, after a fashion. He can pronounce a 'p' correctly, has almost no accent in Hebrew and can fool the soldiers at roadblocks. His father, locked up in the late sixties for his involvement in a bombing at the Hebrew University, loses faith not only in his dead hero, Nasser, but in the whole of the Arab world, after a visit to Egypt.

> The trip left both of them depressed, especially my father, who's lost faith in the Arab world. He says they're too busy dealing with hunger and don't have the energy to deal with Zionism, pan-

> Arabism and war...my father says the best thing would be for our cousins in Tulkarm, Ramallah, Nablus and Bakat al-Hatab to receive the same blue ID cards that we have. Let them become seventh-class citizens in the Zionist state. He says it's better than being third-class citizens in an Arab state. My father hates Arabs. He says it's better to be the slave of your enemy than to be the slave of a leader from within your own people. (Kashua 2002: 224-225).

The hurt is palpable - a sense of abandonment, loss and disenchantment with the once-revered leadership. All is tawdry now. The gilt and glory of nationalist rhetoric hasn't delivered, either in the Arab states or in the Palestinian Authority. The novel ends, as it opens, with the question of the key, the perennial Palestinian motif. The narrator's grandmother too has been worn down by realities on the ground.

> 'What's the matter, Grandma?' I ask.
> 'Go back to sleep, habibi. It's nothing. It's like this every day.'
> ...She says the only reason she's crying is that she used to think she'd be buried in her own land. 'Do you remember where the key to the cupboard is?'
> And we both cry together. (Kashua, 2002: 226-227)

Glenn Patterson and Post – Conflict Criminality

> I have no sense of myself as Protestant. I do though have some sense of Northern Irishness of which I am proud-Northern Irishness free of political and constitutional absolutes-Northern Irishness in the way that I had of Northern Englishness when I lived in Manchester (Walker 1996: 125)

Northern Irish Protestants tend to think of themselves as British first and Northern Irish second; Northern Irish Catholics, on the other hand, tend to think of themselves as Irish first and Northern Irish second (Trew 1998). The bulk of Glenn Patterson's novelistic output, so far, has reflected the conflict, either in its pre-natal form, during the Civil Rights era, in the late sixties, as in *The International* (Patterson 1999), its most intense form, early seventies to early nineties, as in

Burning Your Own (Patterson 1988) and *Fat Lad* (Patterson 1992) or the post-conflict era, as in *That Which Was* (Patterson 2005). Patterson's narrative, according to Kennedy-Andrews, 'seeks to undermine fixed positions and uncover internal contradictions...Patterson deconstructs Protestant history, unmasking mythic memory'. (Kennedy-Andrews 2003: 104). It is not so much the Protestant present that is being taken to task here, but the Protestant past. And *That Which Was*, set in the late nineties, in the first flush of peace process euphoria, is part of the same novelistic palimpsest. In Northern Ireland, long used to the paramilitary postgraduate 'skills transfer' between Republican and Loyalist gunmen and criminals, this situation is likely to be even more serious, in the medium term. It is on the fringes of this shaky, nervous world that Glenn Patterson situates *That Which Was*: East Belfast. A world not quite free of the threatening phone-call, the assassination or the nod-and-wink of protection rackets.

Geography, in Ireland and Israel/Palestine, is history. And history, vis-à-vis land occupation, is geography. Patterson's narrative concerns a Protestant minister, Avery, in predominantly Protestant East Belfast who is visited by a man called Larry who 'seems to remember' committing a murder in the 1970's, in the centre of Belfast. Avery tasks himself with trawling through the past to find the truth. But the past, is a different chronotope altogether, and Avery ends up, apparently, being targeted by his own side - Loyalist paramilitaries - for attempting to dig too deeply in what may have been, in reality, a Loyalist-Security force killing. Conscience, rather than justice, may come to be the final arbiter of right and wrong. Of evil deeds done in the first flush of Republicanism or Loyalism.

Peter Taylor, in his book *Loyalists* (Taylor 2000), details the case of one Protestant paramilitary, Billy Giles who took his own life because the burden of his

own guilt was too much to bear. Giles was convicted of the murder of a former Catholic friend, Michael Fay, in retaliation for the tit-for-tat murder of the Protestant leader of the Shankill Butchers' gang, Lenny Murphy, in 1982. But it is clear that Giles, brought up in a law-abiding, working-class Protestant family, was a clear case of man caught up in conflict who was, at one remove, a victim of the conflict himself.

> The split second it happened, I lost part of myself that I'll never get back. You hear the bang and it's too late. Standing over the body, it hits you. I felt that somebody had reached down inside me and ripped my insides out. You've found somewhere you've never been before and it's not a very nice place. You can't stop. It's too late. (Taylor 2000: 5)

The contrasting elements of Loyalist paramilitary killings and those of Republicans have been pointed out. The sort of solo-run Shankill Butchers' torture and murder described in Eoin McNamee's *Resurrection Man* (McNamee 1994) was less a feature of Republican violence. Equally, Republicans, inheritors of a much more 'seamless' political traditions - stretching back to the 1600's and beyond, at a pinch - were much more likely to see their own individual acts of terror as part of a communal struggle and a token of the validity of their own imagined community. Similarly, the pattern of post-conflict paramilitary criminality varies in both communities. Post-conflict Protestant paramilitaries tend to be involved in drugs, general racketeering, extortion and the like. Post-conflict Catholic paramilitaries, although some have been involved in the above, tend to prefer a more business-like approach to empire-building, centering on money-laundering, fuel-laundering, cross-border smuggling, real estate investments and running legit businesses. At a criminal remove, the Republicans are 'buying back Ireland', if only to line their

own post-Celtic Tiger pockets. Nevertheless, Patterson's post-conflict Belfast is host to hundreds of men like Billy Giles.

> For the past two years the prisons of Northern Ireland had been emptying of paramilitary prisoners. Any day now the most famous prison of them all, the Maze-Long Kesh-would close its gates for good. For the past two years, Avery like most members of the clergy, had been attending conferences on issues arising from this early-release scheme. Many of the prisoners had found the Lord while inside, some had even become pastors and in a few cases established their own congregations. It was expected, though, that for the vast majority the enormity of their deeds would only hit home once they were on the outside again away from their comrades, having to cope on their own.
> Avery replayed Larry's words. I think I've got blood on my hands. Classic reluctance to accept responsibility (Patterson 2005: 12-13).

When memory finally filters through, after the Protestant minister Avery has been falsely set up for the scandal of kerb-crawling, the embedded flashback in the muddled mind of the murderer bears a chilling resemblance to that of Taylor's interviewee, Billy Giles.

> I was going to shout, Sit down before you get hit-I'd never seen anybody being shot, I'd no idea, no idea at all-then Davy slumped against the wall. I was deafened. It was like I was in a bubble. I kept walking forward with the gun out in front of me. I had to make sure it was done properly. Roisin's friend was lying to one side. I went to move her and that's when I saw the chain with the locket on it. I picked it up and felt it in my hand. Then the bubble burst. (Patterson 2005: 235-236)

'The bubble burst': the post-killing, post-coital, post-conflict 'caffeine drop' has kicked in. The glitz and glamour of the 'isms' has worn off. Nothing is quite as Green or Orange or as clear-cut as it once seemed.

Patterson's narrative is of unrequited memory that must be requited, however painful; of the vicissitudes of post-conflict criminality and, by and large, working-class communities left defenceless from their erstwhile defenders. It is all set against the background of a Belfast not quite convinced, just yet, that the worst

is over. It may be, that a generation of war must be followed by a generation of cleansing before the patriotic scourge of paramilitarism can be eradicated. The defenders of the land have become the new oppressors.

After the Ball is Over

If mapping is itself a political act (Black 1997: 262), so too is the attempt to map history through geography. For both colonization and de-colonization are amenable to the rigours of map-making (El-Haj 2001). Nevertheless, it is those, physical, psychological, ethnic and linguistic interfaces that lie within the borders of a country which are best narrated by the novelist. In the lie of language, lies land. Name becomes place; place becomes history, right down to street-naming level, in the Israeli-Palestinian case (Azaryahu 2002: 195-212).

Yayhia Yakhlif's novel, *A Lake Beyond the Wind,* shows how, where and why. It delineates both the creation of a diaspora and the foundation of a state. The backward glance across the river Jordan, is a backward glance across time and space. Said Kashua's *Dancing Arabs* takes up the story by means of the *Bildungsroman* account of the growth to social and political awareness of a young Palestinian man in the second generation of the Israeli state. The narrative takes us up to the middle of the *al-Aksa* Intifada and, a forlorn cry: 'I have no hope'. Kashua's own narrative, from the Israeli side of the armistice line, speaks loudly to the call, among Palestinians within Israel, for parity of esteem with their Jewish counterparts. This ties in with the facts-on-the-ground of cultural semi-autonomy, already extant in the Western Galilee and other areas, delineated in A.B. Yehoshua's *al-Aksa* Intifada novel,

The idea of belonging, while it relates primarily, in the rural situation, to land, family and village, on the greater level demands a fidelity, however nuanced, to the state. None of this can be taken for granted in the situation of the Palestinians within Israel.

> We must not be naïve in thinking that the solution to the socioeconomic distress of the Arab population will blunt the acuity of the nationalist message. However...the price of continued government disregard, on the one hand, and the rising threshold of Arab national demands, on the other, will be a heavy one for both sides, Jewish and Arab alike (Rekhess 2002: 35).

The borderlands between the Irish Republic and Northern Ireland that form a backdrop to the majority of the works of Pat McCabe, along with the post-nationalist *ennui* that informs them, is the gel that cements the zigzag narrative of *Breakfast on Pluto*. Cocking a snoot at the seventies sacred cow of Republican irredentism, his Mitzy Gaynor lookalike transvestite hero/ine, Patrick 'Pussy' Braden, looks with contempt on the passion of her nationalist confreres. Neither Anderson's prescriptive top-down model of nationalism nor Gellner's analysis is sufficient for those ethnic-nationalist conflicts which have emerged over the past thirty or so years (Gerber 2004). For one thing, states, paradoxically, are not the answer to every nationalist-like demand. The 'reconceptualization of sovereignty away from the winner-takes-all assumptions, the entrenchment of minority (but not 'group') rights and the freeing up of identity choices' are all essential (Wilson 2001: 380). We may smile at the linguistic folly of seeing Ulster Scots ('Ullans') - a dialect of English imported into Northern Ireland, allegedly spoken among Protestants of East Antrim - but the message behind Loyalist demands to have this given parity of esteem with Gaelic, reflect the same sort of yearning for dignity as is apparent on the Catholic side of the divide (Nic Craith 2001).

The persistence of memory, in the Ulster narrative, is central to Glenn Patterson's *That Which Was*. The urban landscape of Belfast reflects the emergence of different realities to those of Pat McCabe's borderlands. Belfast, scarcely more than a mill race, a river and a small collection of houses before 1700, becomes the centre of immigration for Catholic workers west of the Bann, in the early 1800's, as the industrial revolution picks up speed (Bardon 1992: 240). It is then that working-class, and newly-urbanised, Catholics and Protestants lock swords with one another. The war, at the urban level, was as much about bread as circuses. It is, from there, but a short hop to the Belfast Patterson writes about.

> North Belfast was not so much another country as another continent. In comparison with its myriad internal borders the sectarian divides in the east and west were as clear-cut as the 38th Parallel. While he was still assistant in Hollywood Avery had been asked to entertain a colleague from England, in town from the General Assembly and requesting a tour of the city. Avery, coming in by bypass and motorway, started in the north at the sectarian roulette wheel that was Carlisle Circus. Twenty-five minutes later-the Crumlin Road later, Ardoyne, Ligoniel, Oldpark, Limestone Road, Tiger's Bay, North Queen Street, enclave within enclave later-he was approaching the junction again, intending to take a turn for the Shankill and all points west, when his passenger asked could he be dropped off in the city centre...North Belfast had peace lines in public parks (Patterson 2005: 134).

The uneasy transition from *Herrenvolk* system to a rough version of ethnic democracy is not a foregone conclusion. For one thing, memory, in the Patterson narrative, is a major factor. Memory is a double-edged sword: forgiving, ultimately, involves a certain element of forgetting.

Long after the noise of internecine war has died away, the Lambeg drum has faded in the background with the uileann pipes, the post-conflict criminal will be there. It is scarcely a subject to be tackled yet in the Israeli-Palestinian context, but in the Northern Irish context, especially among the rump end of the

Lumpenproletariat stuck with their own liberators, the truth is: the war is over; the war goes on. Unlike most nationalist struggles, no-one can be seen to win, in the Northern Irish situation. Northern Ireland simply cannot be divided up, geographically, between Protestant and Catholic. Accordingly, the normal post-independence strategies of co-opt, criminalise or kill, so beloved of post-colonial regimes everywhere, is not an option in the sectarian sibling rivalry that is the Northern Irish conflict. As with Northern Ireland, so with Israel-Palestine - the family farm can only be divided up so much before it becomes unviable. But the transfer or withholding of sovereignty, as the alpha and omega of reactive nationalism, will always be at the heart of both conflicts. And land, as the primary trope of reactive nationalism, lies at the heart of the narratives McCabe, Yashua, Yakhlif and Patterson.

Chapter 3

The Image of the Enemy

The Need for an Enemy

Maireann na daoine ar scáil a chéile
People live in one another's shadows (Gaelic proverb)

ויאמרו לו אמר נא שבלת ויאמר סבלת
They said to him, "Then say Shibboleth," and he said, "Sibboleth", (Judges 12: 6)

Nationalism needs a negative to affirm its own existence. Choueri cites Breuilly's definition of Nationalist oppositional politics thus 'A Nationalist opposition can seek to break away from the present state (separation), to reform it in a nationalist direction (reform) or to unify it with other states (unification)' (Choueri 2001: 20). It could be reasonably argued that Northern Irish nationalists, in the late sixties and seventies, exhibited all three trends simultaneously. It could also be argued that all three exist among the Palestinian population within Israel, at present. In all of these processes of nationalism, however, identification, differentiation, deconstruction and demonisation are just a few of the functions central to the creation of the image of the enemy. The shibboleth story cited in the Book of Judges, although it is often cited as a lesson in linguistics, is essentially about identifying the enemy. A single sibilant can make the difference between life and death. Thus, the native is defined by what he is not as much as by what he is, as one Northern Irish Loyalist paramilitary involved in a notorious killing in the early 1970's notes.

> My home wasn't a loyalist one in a political sense but my father hated Catholics. He wouldn't have any in the house, even when

> one of my brothers had a Catholic girlfriend. Often he would talk of the Free State's treachery to Britain in the war in which he, of course, had served(Wood 2006: 6).

British cartoon stereotypes of the nineteenth century fulfil the important function not only of demeaning the enemy, but of underlining the rightness of British territorial claims on Ireland (Perry1971). German propaganda films about Ireland, such as *Glenarvon* (1940) and *My Life for Ireland* (1941), depict a clear and simple enemy oppressing the Irish people: the British invader. The films, with their kitsch sentimentality and *unheimlich* amalgam of Prussian and Irish nationalism, make for amusing viewing now but were useful in playing up the perfidy of Albion even if the impression of Ireland as conveyed by Wehrmacht agents tended to be less than complimentary. Nuanced views have no place in nationalist tableaux. Nationalists, like real estate lawyers, like clear title. And like soldiers, they like a clearly-defined enemy.

We see this process, at another remove, in the latter-day demonisation of Arabs in Hollywood, something which predates 9/11 (Shaheen 2001). This is paralleled by such images in the international literary world (Van Teefelen 2004). A shifty-looking Other, the Arab, on the heels of the terrorist campaigns of the 1970's and 1980's, becomes a portmanteau villain, a symbol of chaos outside the walls and of potential mayhem within. The Sheikh of Araby has metamorphosed, one might say, into the Shaheed of Araby.

The Image of the Enemy and Reactive Nationalism

The image of the enemy, however, is not constant but is contingent on the relationship between opponents. Founding myth views of Israelis tend to become more complex as time passes (Sela-Sheffey 2004). That is to say, the image of the

enemy is reactive to changes in the relationship between combatants. In this respect, the image of the enemy is an emblematic realisation of one fundamental reality of reactive nationalism: volatility. The Linenhall Library in Belfast is full of memorabilia of 'the Troubles', including magazines, newspapers, posters and postcards depicting the enemy in various shapes and forms. The aim of such representations is to deconstruct the threat by pointing up the enemy's lack of gumption at a time when the Provisional I.R.A. was levelling Belfast and towns around Northern Ireland with car bombs. Belfast children's songs of the 1970's in Republican areas took popular songs and gave them a paramilitary twist.

> I got two, I got three, shot a Brit with a 303
> With a knicknack paddywack, give a dog a bone
> All good Provies come back home
> I got four, I got five
> Seán MacStiofáin is alive…

While Loyalist murals tend to tie in the Battle of the Boyne (and the victory of King William of Orange), the Battle of the Somme and paramilitary groups such as the Ulster Freedom Fighters (see above), Republican murals concentrate on dispossession, the hunger strikes, the 1916 Rising and the Provisional I.R.A (Rolston

2007). All seek, one way or another, to define both themselves, their enemies and to stress the continuity of their respective paramilitary traditions.

Literature too is replete with attempts to circumscribe the enemy and, by so doing, defang him. The epic poem, the Battle of Maldon, describes the heroic stand-off between the Anglo-Saxon forces and Viking invaders, oddly enough, giving a poor image (self-critical?) of the defenders who were, ultimately, defeated. Another lynchpin of Anglo-Saxon literature, Beowulf, is also predicated on the image of the enemy in battle, although the main enemy, Grendel, appears to be more a composite than a clear enemy. What is central to the depiction of the enemy, in these examples, is the emphasis on the essential otherness of the enemy. The enemy are, so to speak, *barbaroi*, without the remit of the citizens of Imperial Rome. *El Cantar del Mio Cid* and *La Chanson de Roland* are narratives predicated on the defence of the *ethnie*, homeland and the identification of the enemy. In the case of *El Cantar del Mio Cid*, the Muslim enemy encountered during the *reconquista* is being portrayed; in the case of *La Chanson de Roland*, it is the Basques who play the role of the enemy. The enemy, out there, must first be known and deconstructed before he is encountered.

What becomes clearer, however, as we focus in on the Irish, Israeli and Palestinian novels, is that the image of the enemy reacts to the changing relationship between the combatants at the literary level as well as at the coal-face.

Eshkol Nevo's *al-'Awdah*: A Slight Return for 'Some Farmers'

> **תהיה סבלני כמו הצבר יא צאדק. חיכית חמישים שנה תחכה עוד שבוע** (Nevo 2000: 151)
> Be patient, O Sadiq, like the sabar (prickly pear). You have waited fifty years…wait another week. (Nevo 2008: 154)

In the summer of 1996, roughly around the period in which Eshkol Nevo's novel *Homesick* (Nevo 2000) is set - at the height of the 'peace euphoria' - I was invited on an outing, with a group of thirty-something Israelis, to a new house being built in a forest clearing, near Kastel, not far from the epicentre of Nevo's novel. Walking about the partially-cleared forest, we passed the lichen-covered ruins of stones houses, scarcely visible among generations of weeds. I asked one of my young Israeli companions, innocently, who had lived in the houses. Turning to me, twice as innocently, she said 'Some farmers, I think. Yes, some farmers. Maybe they just went away.' It is a question raised in Eyal Megged's book, *Woman Country* (Megged 2006), a memoir which begins with the question of 'where did they go?', in relation to his father - Aharon Megged's - life on the kibbutz of Sdot Yam, built on the lands of the village lands of the Palestinian village of Qisarya (Khalidi 1992: 184). Megged speaks of a 'state built upon a disaster', which can, of course, be interpreted in two different ways – as the *Shoah* or *al-Nakba*.

In Nevo's novel, the war of 1948 is more than fifty years in the past. However, *al-Naksa* ('the setback', i.e., the Arab defeat in the June 1967 war), which had seen further clearances along the 'seamline' west of Jerusalem, particularly in

the Latrun salient, has scarcely taken place a generation earlier (Murphy-O'Connor & Cunliffe, 1998: 319). Eshkol Nevo's novel, is a novel of 'slight return' in that the peripheral Palestinian labourer who flits in and out of the narrative only achieves a partial return. The novel's multi-layered, multi-voice narrative represents the backward glance of a young Israeli writer who wasn't even born when the War of 1948 or the Six Day War took place.

Homesick, it is fair to say, is a novel that fits well into what might be called the *Literature of Contrition*, the attempt, by members of a *Herrenvolk* group, to atone for past wrongdoings. We might cite some of the works of Nadine Gordimer and Gunther Grass, in this respect. Despite the fact, however, that Nevo is writing at a temporal remove from the original elements of the conflict, his novel follows firmly in the footsteps of both the painful realism of Brenner and the War of Independence self-scrutiny of Yizhar. It is not so much *Kunstlerschuld* that is at issue here, but rather a sort of growing up - a recognition that 'some farmers lived here - once.' It is, in this respect, a deeper engagement with the origins of the conflict than those novels that deal, either centrally or peripherally, with the effects alone.

In his introduction to his comprehensive survey of what Palestinians themselves call 'the depopulated villages', *All That Remains* (Khalidi 1992), the historian Walid Khalidi cites Moshe Dayan.

> Jewish villages were built in the place of Arab villages. You do not even know the names of these Arab villages, and I do not blame you because geography books no longer exists, not only do the books not exist, the Arab villages are not there either. Nahlal arose in the place of Mahlul; Kibbutz Givat in the place of Jibta; Kibbutz Sarid in the place of Huneifis; and Kefar Yehosuhu'a in the place of Tal al-Shamun. There is not one single place built in this country that did not have a former Arab population (Khalidi 1992: xxxi).

Khalidi tartly remarks that the Zionist colonisation of Palestine 'represents one of the most remarkable colonizing ventures of all time, and certainly the most successful such venture in the twentieth century.'(Khalidi 1992i: xxxi). He goes on to claim that he is not proposing the delegitimization of Zionism but for 'a moment of introspection by the 'contemporary engineers of Zionism.' Nevo's *Homesick is* a token of such introspection, by a young Israeli writer.

...השם הרשמי מעוז ציון השם הלא רשמי קסטל (Nevo, 2000: 9)
The official name is Maoz Ziyon. Unofficially, it's called Castel...
(Nevo 2008: 2)

The centrality of the location of the novel, Kastel, in the micro-narratives of the War of 1948, is revealed with reference to the fall of the Palestinian leader 'Abd al-Qadir al-Husseini (Morris, 2004: 235). It is no accident, therefore, that Nevo should locate the nexus of his novel in one of the Israeli suburbs near Kastel - Maoz Zion. The suburb of Maoz Zion itself, lies on a bus line that includes the Arab town of Abu Ghosh and the Orthodox district of Kiriath Anavim.[3] Against the general background of 'the situation' and the aftermath of a suicide bombing, the 'slight return' is played out, in parallel with the messy details of the relationships of the couples in the four houses of the original Hebrew title.

The 'Four Houses and Nostalgia' of the Hebrew title refers to the four houses in Maoz Zion at the centre of the story and the thread of nostalgia - particularly on the part of the Palestinian labourer Sadiq - that runs beneath the narrative. In the first house, a young Israeli couple, Noah and Amir, have set up house. She, Noah, is a student of photography. He, Amir, is a psychology student. In a nearby house, the parents of a young boy called Yotham, are distraught at the recent death of their

[3] Kiriath-Anavim was the resting site of the Ark of the Covenant before it was taken back to the Israelite camp by David. The ancient Hebrew name of the site is preserved in the Arabic Kirya Anab.

soldier son in Lebanon. Their son takes refuge in the attention of the young student Amir, as a sort of surrogate father, as his own father drifts further from him. In the third house, Sima, a mother of two children, and her husband, Moshe, are at loggerheads over the increasing influence of Moshe's Orthodox Jewish (Kurdish) family on him. But it is in the fourth house, the house of Moshe's elderly parents, Avraham and Gina, that the buried story of Kastel will be played out, for Avraham and Gina are living in the house abandoned in 1948 by Sadiq's family. Sadiq himself, now a middle-aged Palestinian labourer living on the West Bank, has but the vaguest childhood memory of the house. But there is enough to allow him to identify the old building as that of his early childhood days.

The abandoned/destroyed Palestinian villages within Israel show great variety with respect to their nature and remains. The eye can, with relative ease, pick out in various landscapes, the typical indicators of the remains of a village, well before the remnants of dressed stone and shattered earthenware appear. Carob trees, *sabar* (prickly pear) and, most tellingly of all, ancient olive trees planted in formation all betray the nearby presence of a cluster of ruined houses or, at the very least, the presence of the village *musha'* (common property). A particular giveaway, in terms of recognising older Palestinian houses, even when remnants of walls of hand-dressed stone are minimal, is the *kantara* (Arabic 'bridge'), or arch, over a doorway or window, with its central supporting stone. It is this feature that catches the middle-aged Palestinian worker's eye when he is walking about with the younger workers.

> I'd forgotten about that house for years. I was four when they threw us out, or maybe five, I don't know. When we ran away, they left behind the jug my birth certificate was in. For all the years since then, I forgot everything, and it was in prison, of all places, that I remembered. I wasn't inside for a long time, only six months. I'm not an Intifada hero, not the chief of a fighting unit, all I did was 'assist in terrorist activity', and it wasn't even on purpose. I gave a lift in my car to someone who wanted to stab a

> soldier at the gates to the military government office, and I didn't even know they had a big knife under his coat or that the Secret Service was on to him already and waiting for him there. Not that they believed me when they questioned me. Why should they believe an Arab? They slapped me. Shook me. Twisted my arm and then every finger separately. But they didn't have any proof, and they caught him before he stabbed anyone, so they only gave me six months. I got off cheap, like they say. But those six months, wa'alla, like a hundred years for me – those thoughts about my wife and my sons, and the time, the time that never passes when you're in prison. Even though they have roll call in the morning and roll call in the afternoon, and even though I took two Hebrew lessons a day from the famous Mustafa A'alem, who was in for twenty years and knew Hebrew better than the Jews, even so, the time didn't pass.
>
> You're lying there on your bed at night, you can't fall asleep because of the fleas and the snoring, and the air stinks so much you can't breathe, and because there's nothing to do, you start imagining things. Like from inside the smoke of a nargileh, the rooms float up one by one, the small kitchen that was always full of pots, the bathroom with the door so low that Papa had to bend his head to through it, the small step you had to walk down in order to go into the living room, the three mattresses on the floor, Monir's, and then Marwan's, the floor tiles that had drawings on them, the broken tile in the right – hand corner, the heavy door that creaked a little when it closed, the yard where you and your brothers used to play, and the window with the arch that looks so much like the window of the house I'm looking at now. The house that belongs to that family whose name I still don't know (Nevo 2008: 31-32)

Sadiq is one of 'Madmuni's Arabs', a group of West Bank workers employed by an Israeli contractor living in the area. When he decides to pay a visit to the old house, now inhabited by the elderly Israeli couple, Avraham and Gina, he is stopped by Sima, their daughter-in-law, living in the house below. He claims that he is looking for drinking water. But he is now on the radar, *chashúd,* in the Hebrew security term: suspect (חשוד). In the end, his own recent and distant past will catch up with his present. But, for the moment, life goes on. Sima becomes even more estranged from her husband, Moshe, as he insists on sending their daughter to a local orthodox kindergarten and comes increasingly under the influence of his family in Tiberias. Noah and Amir, the young students, struggle to find common cause in their

It is often claimed, incorrectly, that the Hamas, Islamic Jihad and *al-Aksa* Martyrs' suicide bombing campaign kicked into gear when Ariel Sharon came to power during the first days of the *al-Aksa* Intifada. While statistics show that there was a great acceleration during the height of the *al-Aksa* Intifada, the first sustained appearance of the campaign was during the pre-*al-Aksa* period, when the peace process 'honeymoon' was still in progress. The conflicting agendas - although they sometimes overlapped - between the two main strands of Palestinian militarism (the nationalist and the Islamist) - come to the fore at this point. Although the sordid reality of this campaign only began to sink in after the London and Madrid bombings, a Human Rights Watch report had already concluded that the attacks constituted war crimes (Human Rights Watch 2002). This delayed reaction on the European mainland tallies with that in the Republic of Ireland, in 1974, with respect to the reality of the Provisional IRA bombing campaign of the early seventies, in Northern Ireland. Conversely, the 'contamination' of Islamic groups in the U.K. with enthusiasm for jihadist suicide attacks, is well documented (Bright 2006).

> On days when there's a suicide bombing, Jews don't answer you. Even if you ask, 'How much does this juice cost?' they don't answer. And if they do, you can tell from their voice how scared they are. On days when there's a suicide bombing, wherever you go, the radio is screaming words like 'savages' or 'murderers'. And you want to scream back at the radio. On days when there's a suicide bombing, I feel shame in my heart, and pride too, and I don't understand how I can feel both these things at the same time (Nevo 2008: 149).

Ghassan Kanafani's novella, *The Return to Haifa*, is based on the story of a Palestinian return – of a couple crossing into Israel, from the West Bank, in the

immediate aftermath of the 1967 war, hoping to find their old home in Haifa. In *Homesick,* the phenomenon of the 'half-return' is also played out in Sadiq's memories of the days after the Israeli occupation of the West Bank.

> A few days after the Six Day War ended, people started visiting their old homes. Quietly, not making a big fuss about it, they'd pile the whole family in one small truck, and go. Back then, they didn't have to pass five checkpoints every hundred metres like today…the ones who came back from al-Quds brought plums from the plum tree, the crooked one near the square, and figs from the muzawi tree, the one that had fruit as big as pears, and they told us that the Jews had built ugly buildings that didn't fit in with the mountain, and that they gave all the streets names of wars, Independence Street, Victory Street, Six Day War Street, and they told us about Aziz, the only man who stayed in the village to wait for the soldiers, and after he was killed, he turned into a black demon that entered into the body of the Jews and made them crazy…even now, sitting in front of the TV, my mother's eyes are glittering, but not with anger. In the Egyptian movie, Mahmud Yassin comes home to his village after six years in Cairo and only the dog recognises him. Yekhreb baitak, she curses Mahmoud Yassin's father, who's looking at him through the window, how can you not know your own son?! …I looked at the dog that's licking Mahmoud Yassin's face, and remember mother's story about Assuad, the dog. It's a story she always tells when my aunts and uncles from Ramallah come for Ramadan or Id al – Fitr, and someone mentions the sweet *katayif* my grandmother used to make, and before long, they're talking about that house. Then she says: Do you remember Assuad, *al – Kalb*, the dog? Everyone says taba'an, of course, and they turn their chairs towards her to hear again about the night they ran away, about how Assuad, who was a big, black dog, refused to leave the house and how his howls filled up the whole wadi…he managed to break loose and ran to the village with the iron chain trailing after him and never came back. They never say him again. 'Even a dog was more faithful to his home than we were. Even a dog!' My mother always ended the story with those words, and all my aunts and uncles lowered their heads in shame. Then they sang *mawal* to the village. My father usually started quietly and all of us gradually joined in:
> *Ya dirati ma lakh aleinu lom, lomakh ala menkahn.* Do not be angry with us, our village, be angry with those betrayed us (Nevo 2008: 71-73)

In the Northern Ireland of the seventies and eighties, it was common for the Provisional I.R.A. to target those companies and workers employed by the security forces, in building and ancillary area. This had a 'chilling effect' on those considered to be collaborating with the occupation. Although the same phenomenon has been seen among Palestinian militants, it has been less common. Nevertheless, Sadiq's mother, in rejecting her semi-right of return to visit her abandoned house and disgust at Sadiq's collaboration in building 'houses for the Jews in your own village' is signifying the same grassroots level reaction.

The motif of the key to the lost house, naturally enough, is referred to. One of the ultimate motifs of the Palestinian diaspora - Palestinian exiles possessing, in exile in Baghdad and Damascus and Cairo - keys to their old houses, it is an unconscious parallel of the Jewish motif of the keys owned by Jews deported from Spain in 1492. The irony is an uneasy one: a key does not guarantee *al-'Awdah*, either at a remove of five hundred years of fifty years. The fact that Sadiq's mother comments that the dog, Aswad, was more faithful than its master is, a nod in the direction of the betrayal of the Palestinian populace both by their own leadership and the Arab world in general.

In *Homesick*, nevertheless, if Sadiq's mother will not go to the house, Sadiq will. Furthermore, he pledges to retrieve for her something mysterious hidden in a little bag in the wall - an heirloom left behind. Sadiq, consequently, is on a classic hero quest. He has been given the task and has accepted. Sadiq must now go and face the foe - the elderly Israeli couple, Avraham and Gina. Before that though, Avraham will have what amounts to a stroke and will be treated with a religious charm witnessed by the cool, detached trainee Israeli photographer, Noah. (Noah herself refers to the religious Jews as '*dossim*', a smarmy corruption of the Hebrew

term for 'religious'(דתיים) meant to mimic the Ashkenazi pronunciation of Yiddish-speaking Jews of East European provenance.)

As the relationships within the novel come to grief, the peripheral Arab enters the frame in a long, multi-layered scene that manages to works on several levels.

> In the central scene in the novel, which moves between the fantastic, the absurd and the realistic, the characters are thrown together when Sadiq attempts to retrieve a memento of his previous family life which has been lodged in the wall of the house of Moshe's parents. This allegorical, tragic-comedy scene, reflects perfectly the cruelty of the politics of relationships of the melting-pot of identities which is called 'the State of Israel.' And it is the most brilliant I have come across in modern Israeli literature (Herzog 2004).

When Sadiq bursts into Avraham and Gina's house to look for the hidden artefact in the wall, he is both interloper and irredentist. As a Palestinian Arab entering the house of an Israeli, without leave, he is an interloper; as someone returning to his family home, after some fifty years, he is an irredentist. When Sadiq finally enters the house, he is overwhelmed by childhood memories.

> I touch the stones, stroke them like you stroke a woman you love, but I don't feel anything in my heart. I tell the Jews, there was a wall here, this is where my mother used to cook, that's where the mattresses were and the heater next to them. I just say it, without feeling it, like I'm telling Rami the contractor about how we're doing on the frame. How long I've waited for this day, this moment, how much I've dreamed about touching these walls, walking on this floor, and now I don't feel a thing. Here's the old door. Here's the window I used to look out to see Wasim waiting for me, whistling. Everything's here, even the old fig tree. But the smell, the house is full of their smell. The smell of that old man who thinks he's my father, and of that woman with the wrinkles around her eyes. Their smell is in the walls and the floor and the sofa and the door and in the air and everywhere, even in the coffee. So why did I come here? My mother was right not to let us go to the old house when everyone else went, in '67. What for? It's better to dream. To sing songs (Nevo 2008: 188).

This mating of the 'private story' and the 'national story' is nothing new in modern Hebrew literature (Mishani 2004). We rather take it as read, that writers such as Oz,

Grossman and Yehoshua's detailing of 'small lives' reflects deeper concerns. What is still unusual, for all of that, is Eshkol's engagement with his Palestinian character. The *enemy qua enemy* is dealt the most complicated hand of all: he is allowed return. At the end of the day, of course, *al-'Awdah* is only a slight return for there is no home for Sadiq, save the temporary home of the prison into which his nostalgic caprice lands him.

> He walks back into the tent, lies down on the bed. His back hurts. The hunger in his heart makes him want to scream. But still, he sinks deeply into a dream.
> Sometimes, when he wakes up in the morning, he reaches for his wife, thinking for one sweet moment that he's back in the old life (Nevo 2008: 300).

'Those Who Remain Behind': the Catholics of '22 as the Arabs of '48

> *Take it down from the mast, Irish traitors*
> *It's the flag we republicans claim*
> *It will never belong to Free Staters*
> *For they brought on us nothing but shame*
> (Northern Irish Republican Taunt Song)

Seamus Deane's novel, *Reading in the Dark* (Deane 1997), is a sort of aide memoire of a working-class, upwardly immobile Northern Irish catholic childhood, in the post-war, pre-Troubles period, and reflects the unease of those nationalists/Catholics 'left behind' in what has been referred to, in Republican circles, as the rump statelet of Northern Ireland. There are parallels here with the 'Arabs of '48', as Palestinians living within Israel have come to be called.

The Unionist-controlled government of Northern Ireland, adept at gerrymandering electoral boundaries, 'freezing' Catholics out of jobs and manipulating public housing proved unable, due to the post World War Two British Labour government education reforms, to bar Catholics from rising up through the educational system. The increasingly better educated Catholic population, ever more

articulate and demanding, was no longer happy to accept the 'Croppy lie down' imperative of the Unionist government.[4] The fact of the matter is that, *ab initio*, the British plantations differed, from North to South and that things were always, especially after 1922, going to develop along sectarian planter V native lines.

> The Plantation of Ulster, like the colonisation of America, was a Protestant undertaking. There was to be no repeat of the failed Munster Plantation, in which English Catholics had also taken part (Tanner 2001: 123).

The sort of intermarriage that might, ultimately, have blurred sectarian differences, was more likely to take place in the South of Ireland, from as far back as the Middle Ages and the Norman conquest (Leerssen 1996: 168). Some Northern Catholics went the civil rights route, in response to discrimination; others followed the nationalist route. Here again, it is not hard to see a certain overlap between the attitudes of the 'Arabs of '48' and Northern Irish Catholics. The difference, in the Israeli case, is that, in recent times, the civil rights and nationalist components have melded together, in certain areas, at what might be called the Umm al-Fahm faultline, to morph into outright Islamist rejection of the Israeli state, on theological grounds. This difference aside, it is the sense of *istighrab* (alienation) and of second-class citizenship that, initially at any rate, fuel the fear and loathing of both the Palestinian '*báqiin*' (those who remain) and the Northern Irish '*báqiin*'. Paradoxically however, from a southern perspective, the partition of Ireland, in 1922, provided a stability much desired.

> A further cause of the stability of early Irish democracy was partition, which hived off from what amounted to a new country,

[4] 'Croppy lie down' is an old Loyalist term, said to originate in the 1798 Rebellion, that calls on Catholics/Fenians to know their place.

> that part of the island that posed a social and political problem...there existed in Northern Ireland a settled community of Protestant faith with a strong military tradition and firm determination never to be absorbed into a Catholic state where they would be outnumbered four to one; to put it in the terms of the 1990's. A united Irish democracy would have had at best the problems of Czechoslovakia, at worst, those of Bosnia Herzegovina (Garvin 1996: 24).

In other words, the continuation of partition was as much a case of the fledgling Irish Free State not wanting the north as of the Protestant section of Northern Ireland not wanting the south. A similar dynamic exists between Northern Irish Protestants and the British public in general. The shocking experience, for Northern Irish Protestants of being identified as mere 'Micks', on the British mainland, in the 1970's and 1980's, was a salutary reminder that many of the traditions they had preserved in ideological aspic over the years, such as a veneration for Queen, country and Empire Loyalism, went altogether unapplauded in the kebab shops and bars of the average British High Street. Similarly, in the economic downturn of the eighties, southern Ireland decided that it needed a united Ireland like a hole-in-the-head.

Reading in the Dark is replete with these contradictions. Its narrator emerges from the juvenile *jahilliyya* of myths and misunderstandings and manufactured memory cognoscent of several enemy entities: the Northern Irish state, the church (his own Catholic church, that is), the southern 'quisling' state and, ultimately, the enemy within the I.R.A. group who represents, historically, the lowest of the low: the informer.

The central 'easy lie' in the narrative involves events during the partition of Ireland.

> The crowd in the street, at the top of the Bogside, started singing rebel songs, but the police fired over their heads and the crowd scattered. The IRA gunmen, on the roof or at the top-floor

> windows, fired single shots, each one like a match flare against the sky. They were outgunned, surrounded, lost. It was their last-minute protest at the founding of the new state (Deane 1997: 35).

While the new Free State in the south - it did not become a Republic until 1949 - insisted that a united Ireland was part of its ultimate *raison d'etre*, in reality, the first imperative, as with all new states, was survival. While, de facto, co-operating with the British Second World War effort, even if in a subdued manner, it stymied the IRA threat by introducing internment in the south and instigating rigorous press censorship (Fisk 1985). Defanging the IRA in the south had little to do with love of Northern Protestants or deference to British sensibilities - it had everything to do with self-preservation.

In the case of Northern Ireland, the hated 'B Specials', a special unit of the Royal Ulster Constabulary, made up predominantly of Protestants, became an effective, if highly discriminatory, method of keeping down Catholic dissent (Farrell 1978). In the closing chapters of Deane's narrative, during the Battle of the Bogside, it is, strangely enough, the British army's arrival in Derry that saves the Catholics of the Bogside from the onslaught of the hated 'Specials', immortalised in Republican lore by popular ballads.

> *Craigavon sent the Specials just to shoot the people down*
> *They thought the IRA was dead, in dear old Belfast town*
> *But pretty soon their tune was changed, with rifles and grenades*
> *When they met the first battalion of the Belfast Brigade*

Catholic, as a synonym for nationalist/republican, was a widespread concept in 20th century Northern Ireland, because it reflected the demographic reality rather than any great confessional/ideological overlap. Paradoxically, Northern Irish Catholics, living in the west wing of the British state, so to speak, were living in a more pluralist place than their co-religionists in the south. Nevertheless, although the liberalisation of southern politics was, ostensibly at any rate, carried out to make the

south more appealing to northern Protestants, its long-term effect was to push the south much further down the line of pluralism than the north.

Religions in conflict tend to be over-identified as badges of resistance. Since the south, after 1922 had, to a great extent, lost its 'internal' enemy, the relevance of the Catholic Church as the badge of resistance or particularism began to fade. Northern Irish Catholics, on the other hand, despite the enlarging experiencing of the EU and migration, could not ignore the other and, to an extent, the experience of being 'agin' their Protestant fellow citizens became part of their identity. Deane's young hero reflects this troublesome thought.

> It was a city of bonfires. The Protestants had more than we had. They had the twelfth of July, when they celebrated the triumph of Protestant armies at the Battle of the Boyne in 1690; then they had the twelfth of August, when they celebrated the liberation of the city from a besieging Catholic army in 1689; then they had the burning of Lundy's effigy on the eighteenth of December. Lundy had been the traitor who had tried to open the gates of the city to the Catholic enemy. We had only the fifteenth of August bonfires; it was a church festival but we made it into a political one as well, to answer the fires of the twelfth. But our celebrations were not official, like the Protestant ones. The police would sometimes make us put out the fires or try to stop us collecting old car tyres or chopping down trees in preparation (Deane 1997: 33).

In *Reading in the Dark*, the 'newer' enemy, the unfaithful south which, in many northern Catholics' eyes, has turned its back on the north, is a hinterland of lost hope. The narrator's trips over the border, to Donegal, a natural hinterland to Derry, are replete with myth and magic. The evocation of a unified Celtic past, when the young boy visits An Grianán (the sun fort, an ancient fort overlooking the peninsula) is touching in its appeal to some sort of secret nationalist script. It fits easily into imaginings of Banshees (fairy woman who were supposed so wail in a prediction of death) and the Field of the Disappeared. Nevertheless, the sense of the south

contained in the novel is not of a haven for Northern Catholics but rather of a 'cold house'.

The British historian Howe (Howe 2000) cites Fionnuala O'Connor's in-depth interviews with Northern Irish Catholics, in the nineties in this respect.

> Attitudes to the South are not lightly placed on record. People preferred to talk about what they took to be Southern opinions of Northerners, even though these were unpleasant, rather than about their own feelings. Those who were best informed became passionate about one aspect alone: revisionism. Not the academic business of re-examining history, 'revisionist' was instead used angrily to mean 'anti-Northerner' in general (Howe 2000: 90).

Howe goes on to suggest that Southerners view Northerners as something of a 'nuisance or an embarrassment, an obstacle on the road to Ireland's modernisation and Europeanisation'. In the emergent consciousness of Deane's Northern Irish Catholic working class Stephen Hero, isolation within and without the house is a key trope. It is no accident that Peach (Peach 2004: 46-47), referring to the family secret - political and personal - that eats away at the narrator's family in *Reading in the Dark*, chooses a passage to highlight this fact which can be read as a metaphor for the whole sundering of the island into two 'states' and the hurt in the heart of *al-báqiin* of '22.

> So broken was my father's family that it felt to me like a catastrophe you could live with only if you kept quiet, let it die down of its own accord like a dangerous fire. Eddie gone. Parents both dead within a week. Two sisters, Ena and Bernadette, treated like skivvies and boarded in a hen house. A long, silent feud. A lost farmhouse, with rafters and books in it, ear the field of the disappeared. Silence everywhere...I felt we lived in an empty space with a long cry from him ramifying through it. At other times, it appeared to be as cunning and articulate as a labyrinth, closely designed, with someone sobbing at the heart of it (Deane 1997: 42-43).

If the British government, at one level, can be condemned for funding a system that discriminated against its minority for some fifty years, so too can the southern Irish state, ever willing to play political footsie with the Northern minority when it suited their *Realpolitik* internal needs. As a diversionary tactic from criticism at home, the Republic of Ireland used the northern situation well. It is the British Labour government's abandonment of the power-sharing Unionist-Nationalist government, on the heels of the all-party Sunningdale Agreement (on power-sharing between Protestants and Catholics), in 1974, in the face of the Loyalist Ulster Defence Association's strike and campaign of violence, that should draw the most criticism, however. Thirty years later, power-sharing is now on the cards, what one nationalist commentator called 'Sunningdale for slow learners.' The British government's culpability has less to do with the 17th century Plantation of Ulster and more to do with the funding of an unfair system. Interestingly, it was left to a Tory government, under Margaret Thatcher, to stand up to the intransigence of unionism in the period of the Anglo-Irish agreement. In other words, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, like the Republic of Ireland, eventually came to stand up to its 'clients' within the host community of Northern Ireland. The tail, Loyalist or Republican, would no longer wag the dog, financially speaking.

The great 'wising up' from the *jahilliyya* in *Reading in the Dark*, takes place not as one Joycean epiphany but in dribs and drabs. The mystery of the execution of the narrator's Uncle Eddie bubbles away beneath the narrative and the *omerta* involved blights all. The ultimate revelation comes via a Catholic RUC man, Burke, who plays the role of turncoat, in certain respects, in the novel.

> Well, she told me, she let him know in quick order why. Injustice. The police themselves. Dirty politics. It's grand to say let it stop to people who have been the victims of it. What were they supposed to do? Say they're sorry they ever protested and go back to being

> unemployed, gerrymandered, beaten up by every policeman who took the notion, gaoled by magistrates and judges who were so vicious it was they who should be gaoled, and for life, for all the harm they did and all the lives they ruined? (Deane 1997: 2003).

The sectarian bias of the state has now been highlighted. But the crookedness within the ranks of the 'oppressed' complicates the picture. Uncle Eddie, framed for a murder he didn't commit, in revenge for one he did, is now revealed as a victim of 'his own.'

> He (RUC man Burke) still remembered his friend, Billy Mahon, who had started out with him all those decades ago in the police force in the days of the shootings after the Treaty. Those were bad years, he said, the early twenties. Northern Ireland had had a cruel birth. And Billy Mahon had had a cruel death, and he wasn't the man responsible for the death of her father's friend that night outside the newspaper office. Your father, he told her, was a hard man and a clever man. He had got off for that killing and they couldn't get him on anything after that, he was so careful. My mother said her voice had come back at that; she told hi, she said, that it wasn't for want of trying and Sergeant Burke had just nodded and said all right, they had got back at him by using McIlhenny, Katie's husband, as he was later to be. McIlhenny was their man. He had given them the tip-off. But it was too dangerous to have him brand Eddie directly with that, so they had found a way to let it leak, as if by accident, that Eddie had done it. Larry McLaughlin was the fall guy for that; he thought he had picked up incriminating evidence against Eddie from a friendly source within the police. It was a double-cross on double-cross; and it had worked. So, when Eddie was shot, they were going to let her father know the mistake he had made but instead they had been told to keep their man, McIlhenny, in place, as a kind of sleeper and they had done that until the time, after he had married Katie, someone had found out and told (Deane 1997: 205).

As in all societies riven with cross-community tensions, the informer, the turncoat and the double-dealer swim freely. The sad knowledge that the narrator's own side was responsible for the killing Uncle Eddie - due to falsely planted information - is a hurtful one. It is much the same sort of scene that Toolis depicts, seventy years later on.

> A local woman out for an evening walk with her dog found him lying on the verge at the Coach Road junction, about a mile and half from the village of Newtonhamilton, in the IRA 'bandit country' of South Armagh. Patrick Flood's hands were tied behind his back with masking tape and a black garbage bag had been pulled over his head; the bag dripped blood. It was a still July night, in 1990, a quiet night for the quiet death of an IRA informer (Toolis 1995: 192).

At the end of the day, the curse of the liberators, as much a factor in southern Ireland in the twenties as in Northern Ireland in the nineties, has had to wait for the bones of a political solution. Garvin's tying up of the 1922 period in Deane's novel and the peace-process phase is succinct.

> The North of 1922 set a severe test for the democratic credentials of the Southerners; some of them failed that test at the time, but their successors, under the Fianna Fail Taoiseach Albert Reynolds, passed it with flying colours in 1994. The Treaty settlement of 1921-1922, much fought over at the time, is now complete, and Ireland can finally move on (Garvin 1996: 207).

More than ten years on from that statement, and eighty years on from the fact of partition, it is clear that, little by little, and for reasons of self-interest more than high politics, both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland are slowly coalescing, if not unifying. The sad fact is that it took a civil war that started in the seventies to highlight what was, in essence, a civil rights war. The anecdotal evidence is laid down for both in Deane's *Reading in the Dark*. The selective culling of both Loyalist and Republican sacred cows has already begun, thankfully. Hopefully, we are seeing the final days of both simplistic they-done-me-wrong narratives both of Ulster Loyalism and United Ireland Republicanism. Seamus Deane's *Reading in the Dark*, painfully unravelling competing nationalist micro-narratives, is a pre-emptive strike at this. Kennedy-Andrews is clear on this point.

> Reading in the Dark, written out of the colonial antagonisms and cultural myths which inform the Catholic Nationalist community in Derry, re-establishes the Northern epic (Kennedy-Andrews 2003: 220).

The Morning after Optimism: Sahar Khalifeh

جئت الى الضفة بحثا عنه بحثا عنهم بحثا عن وجهي في الغربة حتى اعرف ما سوف يكون
(Khalifeh 1997: 11)
I went to the West Bank in search of him, in search of them-in search of my own face in the land of exile so that I would know how it would look. (Khalifeh 2005: 3)

Writing on Palestinian literature before the outbreak of the Al-Aksa Intifada, Elad-Bouskilla noted

> The role and status of Palestinian literature in time of war is clear. The question is, what will be the role of Palestinian writing in an era of peace, after the Palestinians have attained independence in a state or in an autonomous regions, or some other variation. This is a fascinating question: only time will tell (Elad-Bouskilla 1999: 142-143).

Some novelists are more reacted to than read. With such novelists, the substance of the narrative tends to overshadow the style. Sahar Khalifeh may be one of these writers. Over a career of some thirty years, as a novelist, her testimony, while not being a betrayal of Palestinian nationalist aims, has shown the traps into which nationalist certainties can draw a demoralised and fragmented population.

Her most recent novels have wandered into the realms of self-criticism and cast aspersions on the purity of the Palestinian state project. Nobody much likes what Harold Pinter once called 'the weasel in the cocktail cabinet', the writer, that is, who sees and tells on his own *nomenklatur*a. Things are much simpler when the writer sticks to the 'national narrative' and reports faithfully on the progression from oppression to liberation, in a seamless, uncritical narrative. The work of writers such

as Kanafani, which form the literary hinterland of the modern Palestinian writer, could not, of course, be anything but committed to the national struggle. Kanafani, as a refugee himself, in 1948, is in the forefront of the reactive nationalist literary response to the War of 1948 (Siddiq 1984). To expect much self-criticism among a population newly mauled by the experience of banishment is not so much naïvely brazen as brazenly arrogant.

But what is to be done, the day after - however flawed and corrupt and circumscribed it may be - independence? What is the committed author's function then? The same antithetical Joycean *non serviam*, once directed against the occupiers, dispossessors and oppressors, must surely be exercised, at some level, against the new elites. Sahar Khalifeh's development, from the heady 'literature of resistance' days of *Wild Thorns* (Khalifeh 1977; 2005), in which she depicts the 'reactive nationalist' radicalisation of a Palestinian youth on the West Bank to *The Inheritance* (2000), where the corruption and incompetence of the Palestinian Authority, the oppression of women and the disenchantment with *al-Thawra* (the revolution) are raised, is an earnest of this uneasy reality.

> You see, being a Marxist, you have to sacrifice certain things; as a privileged individual related to the privileged class, the luxury of having thoughts and not having to carry them into reality. A characteristic of the individualists, of the existentialists, is that when trying to solve problems, they go ahead and then when they face a very, very big problem, which needs a lot of effort not for the individual himself, but for the community, a communal effort, they stop and cannot continue. They make instead this spiritual leap: they either solve it by going back to religion, the supernatural or find it absurd. They are aware that the individual, if he is a genius, can solve many problems; but as an individual he cannot solve big, big social problems (Harlow 1987: 165-166).

The national narrative is an altogether easier one to follow. Things get complicated when self-scrutiny is involved. When, that is, the enemy is as likely to be in the mirror as at the roadblock.

What might have been looked on as quiescence, on the Palestinian side, disappeared, in 1987, with the outbreak of the first Intifada, a spontaneous popular revolt – a reactive nationalist revolt, if the truth be known - precipitated by an event (a traffic accident) that had little to do with the situation. Sahar Khalifeh's *The Inheritance* is pitched, chronologically, at the same period as Eshkol Nevo's *Homesick* - the mid-nineties - at the height of peace process euphoria. It is more a novel of critical reflection than of resistance. It is, in effect, a paean to a Palestinian *Nahda* (revival) - after *al-Nakba* (the disaster) and *al-Naksa* (the setback) - which has not yet come to pass. It is set, so to speak, on the morning after optimism.

Al-'Awdah, the concept of Return, is sacrosanct in Palestinian nationalist tradition, for obvious reasons (Abu-Lughod 2007: 77). Along with the setting of borders, compensation for refugees, Jewish West Bank settlements and the status of Jerusalem, it is at the top of the list in all Israeli-Palestinian parleys. In Sahar Khalifeh's *The Inheritance*, the return to Palestine is embodied in the journey of the narrator, Zayna, back to the eponymous village of Wadi Rihan to claim her inheritance - land left by her not-yet-dead father. Things take a complicated turn when Zayna finds that her dying father has just been married to a carpetbagging competitor, Futna. Insult is added to injury when Futna, on the death of Zayna's father, announces that she is pregnant by him and that the Israeli Hadassah hospital in Jerusalem has facilitated this happy scenario through artificial insemination. The novel is awash with characters operating both against a socio-realist canvas and at a metaphorical level. Nahleh, a former teacher in Kuwait, is an embittered and neglected woman, at fifty years of age, who has spent her life sending back remittances to her Palestinian family, from the Gulf but is now, very clearly, left on the shelf.

> Is this what I get in life, is this what I spent my youth for-living in exile! Is this why I gave him hard-earned money and sweated in Kuwait! Is this what I end up with? He and they, all of them, all squeezed me like a lemon and then left me behind. They loved and hated, had relationships with more women than the hairs in their beards. They became engineers, with God's grace, while I worked in Kuwait, being milked like a cow, teaching and bringing them up, but they paid no attention to me and did what they wanted (Khalifeh 2005: 50-51).

The narrator's own Palestinian-American background, academic experiences in the U.S. and return to the West Bank, clearly mirror, to some extent, Khalifeh's own path. Mazen, a middle-aged cousin, represents the fag-end of the revolution, the one left behind when the tide goes out. Injured in a mine blast, he is portrayed as someone who believed and was betrayed. His fate is paralleled with that of Nahleh.

> My cousin went to his room, leaving me alone in the night, a dark night, an oppressive night. I heard him bang against the furniture, then collapse on his bed and drown in silence...while he told me the story of Beirut and the revolution, she sang the story of a house and children, the ingratitude of the boys and the worries of the girls. His was a love story, and hers was a story of hunger for a living touch. His was the story of a leader and a rock, and hers was about the small concerns of a schoolteacher who began her life a radiant woman and ended a spinster. A spinster? A spinster! A flat word that conjures selfish personal worries and a barren woman, one like the fallow land, unappealing and uninspiring, a land without rain (Khalifeh 2005: 47).

If Mazen is the child of the failed revolution, then Nahleh is its barren handmaiden. And Futna, recently married to Zayna's dying father and pregnant by him, is the carpetbagging local, the mirror image of the Israeli occupier.

At a conference on Palestinian literature in Manchester (October 2006), one of the Palestinian writers onstage was struggling to find the word in English for 'checkpoint'. Out of the blue, a couple of Palestinian voices in the audience shouted

'*machsom*' (מחסום), the Hebrew term. The irony wasn't lost on the audience and a subdued wave of laughter broke out. In the same way that the Arabic component of Farsi and Turkish centres on the military, administrative, legal and religious lexis, Palestinians first Hebrew words - indeed, the ones they use in place of the Arabic terms - tend to relate to security-related realities. This 'stippling' effect in the language, is one of the prime indicators of the inroads the occupation has made into the Palestinian psyche. Palestinian criminals and car thieves in the Palestinian Authority area, have long learned to assimilate enough Hebrew to pass for Jews when they cross the Green Line. The image Khalifeh presents of the Israeli presence, in *The Inheritance*, is a 'stippled' one too.

Checkpoints, separating the West Bank from Israel, are the most obvious point of reference in the narrative. Jerusalem, as a city more often than not out-of-bounds for West Bank Palestinians, is seen almost as an abstraction. In his bitter conversation with the Bey, one of the Jerusalem *'ayyan* (notables), Mazen, the former *feday*, vents his bitterness.

> Mazen turned his face away from him, looking towards the horizon and Jerusalem's night. The Western part of the city was shining in the night and lit the borders of the old wall, the dry valley, and the Jewish cemetery. He whispered to himself, 'Who soiled it, and messed it up, who polluted its cleanliness? You're crying over the destruction now? We were young when you became important, and we followed you. Who but you, children of misfortune, destroyed it?' Then he tapped his brother on the back and told him to join him to get food (Khalifeh 2005: 115).

There is a presumption too, as in the Northern Ireland of the time, that a significant segment of the population will be incarcerated, at any one time. All these are 'givens', in such a situation. The economic matrix formed by the proximity of the Palestinian Authority to the State of Israel, as both supplier or labour and consumer

of goods, is pointed up. It is, indeed, a picture of Lampedusa's famous dictum that 'if things are to remain the same, things will have to change.' Khalifeh's real *saevo indignation*, however, is reserved for Palestinian society, structures and practices, post-*thawra*. Having delineated the evils of occupation and the reactive nationalist response of resistance, she now turns her pen on her own. It is, without doubt, one of the hardest things a writer can do. Khalifeh starts with *al-thawra* and ends up with the returnees, on the morning after optimism, in the carnival of chaos that precedes the death of Futna, the mother of the child who will disinherit Zayna, at an Israeli roadblock.

The simplistic days of *al-thawra* are recalled with a certain sour scepticism, in *The Inheritance*, when Violet, one of Zayna's cousins recalls 'She was a member of that generation of the 1970's, when a girl would watch the leaders of the revolution with awe, listen to the roar of their voices resonating in the microphones and hear people cheering them on' (Khalifeh 2005:178). Khalifeh's authorial sorrow, to a great extent, is for the foot soldiers, represented by the pathetic figure of Mazen, almost a parallel to Kanafani's emasculated Abu Khayzuran, in *Rijal fi al-Shams*, who have fought, lost and are now losing again, in the new Palestine. 'Enough about Guevara or Barara, we've had it with theories and meaningless talk, we want to breath, to live, to have streets in good repair, we don't want streets that look like those of a stone mine or a fish market' (Khalifeh 2005: 98).

The Bey himself, scion of a more elevated family in Jerusalem, if not quite on the level of the Khalidis and Nashashibis, differentiates between what might be called 'opportunistic revolutionaries' and the real revolutionaries, those whose natural reaction to oppression and dispossession fits within the rubric of reactive nationalism. 'As for the riffraff and the gangs, those who come from slums, are those

revolutionaries? What a shame!' (Khalifeh 2005:115). The Bey may be making a social point here, but he is also making a political one, at the micro-level: the purity of the revolution, ultimately, depends on the motives of its handmaidens.

The young returnee, as opposed to the veterans returning from exile in Tunis, is represented by the figure of Kamal, a Palestinian educated in Germany, who had come back to set up a local sewage reprocessing plant both as a commercial proposition and a contribution to the emergence of the new Palestine. He stands apart from the more gauche image of the Palestinian grandees returning to 'swan around' and take the first flight out.

> The returnees would usually bend down and touch the earth with their forehead, and declare, before the cameras and the journalists with tears in their eyes, that the homeland was like the lap of a mother and without it they were nothing. They would stay with family members and be treated like sultans, eat msakhkhand, mansaf and tamriyeh, and knafe on top of all that...they had endured hardships, laboured like everybody, and gave as much as anybody did. While some gave their blood, they gave money, and the revolution took away everything. Now they wanted a share in the cake (Khalifeh 2005: 94-95)

Kamal's plans to set up the sewage plant are stymied by a mixture of apathy, indifference, and wilful obduracy on the part of the local council. He is, like Tayyib Salih's Mustafa Said, left floundering between the banks of two cultures. 'The Germans gave him a house, cars and a bank account, health insurance and a pension, yet every morning as he rode the university bus or the metro, he felt his loneliness and an estrangement that never stopped growing' (Khalifeh 2005:153). While it is clear that Khalifeh is not letting the Zionist project off the hook for instigating the misery of dispossession and occupation, neither is she letting her own side off with peddling dreams-in-exile. It is a note that Khalidi sounds, sardonically, in relation to the retreat of the Palestinian forces from Beirut, in the early eighties.

One more 'victory' like this and we will have the next meeting of the PNC in the Seychelle Islands.

Issam Sartawi, on the evacuation of the PLO from Beirut (Khalidi 1997: 198)

The current 'situation' is seen through the eyes of Nahleh, the Palestinian teacher thrown out of Kuwait after the first Gulf War.

> There was neither law nor police, not even a state to defend their rights... There might be a new operation in Hertsiliya and on the road to Jerusalem, a kidnapped soldier, a burned factory, and a Jewish farmer hit with an axe. His attackers would be chased by the army and the police and the poor Arab workers would spend the whole day in the sun while people there, in Israeli, would spit and swear and throw stones and shoot (Khalifeh 2005: 74).

One is reminded of the apocryphal words of the Protestant Irish nationalist leader, Charles Stewart Parnell, to a workman on his estate in County Wicklow: Ireland may get her freedom but you shall still break stones. Socialism or equality of opportunity, that is to say, is not a *sine qua non* of nationalist ideology. The low moral/morale highground is reached with Nahleh's kidnapping by the children of an intended suitor, a Palestinian real estate agent. Greed for land, but this time among the Palestinians, is at the heart of the matter.

> They were told that Abu Salem had written not only those shares in Nahleh's name, but the lots in the Ghor region, in Anabta, in Sabastiya and in Nablus as well. And so it happened that in the middle of the day, disguised men invaded the house, covered Nahleh with a burlap sack, as is done with traitors, and took her to a dark place smelling of blood and decay. They made her sit on the confession chair where traitors face the interrogators before they are tortured, then axed down (Khalifeh 2005: 124).

There is no question of getting 'the authorities' involved here, because there is no real authority, outside of the Jordanian system, on one side, and the Israeli on the other. Negotiations begin with the paramilitary group, the Black Tigers, for Nahleh's

release. On the one hand, the Palestinians, prey to their own propaganda, are now victims of their own 'liberators.' On the other hand, the Israeli authorities, sitting at the far side of the Green Line, can just smile at the thought of Palestinians oppressing themselves.

As the birth of Futna's child - and rival 'inheritor' to Zayna draws near - a great festival of celebration is arranged in Wadi Rihan. But it is not to be. The carnival turns, like the independence project itself, into a carnival of chaos. Worst of all, against the playing out of the release of Nahleh from her captors, the life of the new child, Palestine in metaphor perhaps, is threatened by that ever-present Palestinian curse - roadblocks. Futna and her child must be brought to hospital but, because of the chaos and the roadblocks, the shortest way is through the Jewish settlement of Kiryat Rahil, a thing which the governor of Wadi Rihan, a returnee himself, cannot countenance politically. Mazen, the disenchanted and neglected revolutionary, sees the Bey swan through the checkpoint, in his Mercedes, because of his Jerusalem number plates. Futna has now been abandoned both by the new Palestinian authority, on political principal, and the Bey, a member of the '*ayyan* and, one might say, 'a professional Palestinian,' on social grounds. The governor reflects on his own disenchantment

> The homeland had become strange, it has become an exile, he thought to himself. The land of dreams was devoid of dreams. The liberation dream has become a mere slogan that doesn't relate to the land, a nightmare. How much he had dreamed while in Dahran and in Lebanon and in Tunisia...here he was now, in front of an olive tree, on a road filled with checkpoints and facing a high fence. This is where the dream ended (Khalifeh 2005: 239).

But it is too late for the mother who slips slowly into unconsciousness. With an Israeli soldier shouting at her to stop the child crying, Sitt Amira takes the baby in her arms and approaches the soldier. 'She then handed them the crying baby,

and said calmly and proudly, in English: Thank you very much. This is your share' (Khalifeh 2005: 251). In the final scene, Zayna quits Palestine despite the fact that, legally speaking, she will share in her father's estate with the newborn child. The inheritance, suddenly, seems scarcely worth the struggle.

The Image Reacts to Reality

Eskhol's Nevo's *Homesick* although seemingly a story of four houses, is essentially the story of one: the Palestinian house abandoned in 1948. With the certainty of the prurient viewer, given several Hitchcockian glimpses of Sadiq, the Palestinian worker, 'skulking about' in the suburb of Maoz Zion, we know that only a return will satisfy our subject. Eshkol, when faced with the actual return of the Palestinian disinherited in 1948, relies on tragic-comedy for effect. A.B. Yehoshua's mute Palestinian - in the 1960's short story 'Facing the Forests'- sets fire to the surroundings because his house has been destroyed, Grossman's West Bank Palestinian savant, Hilmi, in *The Smile of The Lamb* (Grossman 1991*)* ends up in a stand-off with the Israel army and Oz's heroine in *My Michael* (Oz 1972), has erotic fantasies about Arabs out in the caves and bluffs of the West Bank practising the dark arts of terrorism. Only Eskhol's unter-hero actually returns. And, even then, to no great effect.

The Hebrew novel is uneasy about talking about the Arabs in its midst. At almost twenty per cent of the population and, in the Galilee in particular, very visible, this relative absence is a strange phenomenon and is to be contrasted with the presence of the Arab in the work of much earlier writers such as Shami, Smilanksy and Shamir. It is easier, of course, to nod at events and realities over the border. Palestinians within Israel rarely figure in narratives. (A.B. Yehoshua's *The Lover* and

The Liberated Bride really are major exceptions) and, even more rarely, as 'crossers' into Israel. For the great Voortrek, to use the old Boor term, back to Palestine is a nightmare too far. 'What would happen if...?' is replaced by 'what happens when...?' in *Homesick.* In this respect, Eshkol Nevo, grandnephew of Israel's prime minister, Levy Eskhol at the time of the June War of 1967, dares to dream the nightmare. If we do not entirely concur with the sad outcome of the dream, as depicted by Eshkol, we can at least admire the nerve of the writer in conceptualising the messy return of 'some farmers.'

The sanctity of the nationalist project is deeply undermined both by Seamus Deane's *Reading in the Dark* and Sahar Khalifeh's *The Inheritance.* This says less about the rightness or otherwise of the respective causes and rather more about the fragility of human fidelity to those causes. The incident of the R.U.C. / I.R.A. firefight in 1922, on the division of the island of Ireland, at the start of Deane's novel, is skewed by the memory of the killing of an informer. As the narrator grows to awareness, it becomes clear that the simple narrative spun to him in his childhood is not all it seems. When the truth outs, that a double-cross on his own – nationalist - side is the real reason behind the murder, the young boy's faith in the sanctity of homespun histories is rocked forever. As with Khalifeh, this is not a case of denying the wrong done to the displanted or of simplifying the situation in a Panglossian way, but rather an admission of the fact that all stories leak. That there is no single narrative and that, at the end of the day, the storyteller in one's own house is as likely to spin tall tales as the storyteller in the next house. The smallprint of history, sadly, has moveable fonts.

Sahar Khalifeh's image of the enemy starts, as one would expect, with the crossing from Israel into the West Bank. But the American childhood reminiscences

of her heroine, Zayna, are not couched in cosy terms. The familial violence and oppression within her immigrant family and her father's attempt to kill her signal, from the start, that the enemy is going to be as much within the walls as without. While Khalifeh's narrative presumes Israeli occupation and conflict with the occupation forces, her critique of Palestinian society, in terms of abuses of power, violence and sidelining of women, are trenchantly expressed in *The Inheritance.* Although the Palestinians are, by no stretch of the imagination, in an independence scenario, her portrayal speaks with the sort of tone more reminiscent of post-independence criticism than nationalist literary cheerleader. This makes for uncomfortable but essential reading. While neither over-contextualising nor condoning Israeli excesses Khalifeh, nevertheless, realises that the seamless narrative of victim and oppressed can sometimes turn into the narrative of the victim being oppressed by those tasked with protecting her.

Chapter 4

Love and War

A Little Light Existential Angst

This is not Stalingrad, you know. We can't fall back to the fields and start again...
Eyyal Megged, Israeli novelist

البحر امامكم
The Sea is before you
Palestinian saying

Tiocfaidh Ár Lá!
Our day will come!
Republican watchword, 1970's

Irish go home!
Northern Irish Loyalist Wall Slogan

A contrast must be drawn between certain aspects of the violent interaction between Israelis and Palestinians and that between Northern Irish Republicans and Northern Irish Loyalists. While the reactive nature of nationalist violence is readily apparent in both cases, the growth of Islamist-orientated violence on the Palestinian side reflects a different historical interaction with the enemy than in the Northern Irish case.

> Hamas' position toward Israel is uncompromising: negotiations and compromises with Israel are explicitly rejected. It also comes as no surprise that as far as Jews in general are concerned, Hamas subscribes to the essentialist viewpoint alluded to earlier. It views the Jews as eternal enemies of the Muslims; they have to be fought against and can only be tolerated as dhimmis, that is, as subordinate subjects of an Islamic state. Until that goal is achieved, unrelenting and resolute struggle is the only conceivable stance vis-à-vis the Jews (Flores 2006: 163).

None of this, however, should take from the initial source of Palestinian discontentment: land loss and expulsion and the logical first generation violent reaction to the same. Neither should the means used by extremists - religious or secular – take from what may, or may not be, the essential justice of the argument. Halliday makes the important point that we must differentiate between motivation and means (Halliday 2000). The change in the nature of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, over the past two decades, is not simply ideological or abstract however. The general objective of these forces, as stated in both Hizbullah, Hamas and Iranian official dogma is quite clear: the elimination of the Jewish state through jihad, as stated in the Hamas Covenant.

> ...there is no solution to the Palestinian problem except through struggle (jihad)...the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) is a link in the chain of jihad against the Zionist occupation.' (Milton-Edwards 2006: 143)

The political delegitimisation campaign – run in parallel with the physical campaign of Hamas and Islamic Jihad which seeks to 'corner' the Israeli Jewish population by increasingly sophisticated rocket attacks – has no parallel in Northern Ireland. The threat to the existence of the State of Israel and its citizens is, however, ongoing and real and will continue for the foreseeable future. This threat ranges from the micro-managed, one at terrorist cell level, through the threat of inter-state confrontation to the greater Islamist threat. The Hizbullah factor is but one element in this threat (Devenney 2006). The suicide bombing campaign of Hamas and its bedfellows is another.

The ease with which the Left, particularly in Britain, found itself able to 'understand' and contextualise the gruesome act of suicide bombings which

prevailed in the early days of the *al-Aksa* Intifada has been somewhat dented by the 2005 7th July London bombings. Those who marched under the banner 'We are all Hizbullah Now' in protest against Israeli actions in Southern Lebanon, during the summer war of 2006, would have thought twice about marching under a banner proclaiming 'We are all Provisional IRA Now' had the violence been in the (British) jurisdiction of South Armagh against British civilian and military targets. As with the Loyalist Dublin-Monaghan bombings of May 1974 and Southern Irish miscomprehension about destruction north of the border, it becomes more difficult to think in abstract terms of civilian bombing when the target is oneself and one's own family. This emergent reality is reflected, in more recent years, by a grudging semi-acceptance of the right of the State of Israel to exist, a right, strangely enough, freely accorded in the case of other partition 'basket' cases, such as Ireland and India/Pakistan.

The quasi-nationalist violence of Hizbullah in Lebanon, from the early eighties onwards, should be seen as a token of a far greater existential threat, micro-managed by Iran, through Syria. The Palestinian nationalist forces of *Fatah* seem almost orthodox, by comparison. There is no escaping the fact that what started, in Palestine, in the early years of the twentieth century as, essentially, a row over land and a reactive nationalist response, has now mutated into something much grimmer.

Accordingly the note of existential fear thrumming softly beneath much of modern Israeli literature, such as Castel-Bloom's *Human Parts* (Castel-Bloom 2003), is not predicated on the much-mythologised 'fear of the Other' as such, but on a well-founded sense, particularly in the long shadow of the Yom Kippur War, of a clear and ever present danger of nothing less than extirpation. The lynching of two Israeli soldiers, in the opening days of the *al-Aksa* Intifada, in Ramallah, in October

2000, was evidence enough to most Israelis that this show would be a different one. The escalation in the suicide bombing campaign was yet another hint. This was further confirmed by the Hizbullah-initiated summer war of 2006. The message is simple: the Palestinians, the Arab world in general, and the Shiite orthodoxy in Iran can afford to lose a war. The State of Israel, not only cannot afford to lose a war but, as in the case of the 'Second Lebanon War' of summer 2006, cannot be seen to lose a war either. The type of cosmic war acknowledged by Juergensmeyer (Juergensmeyer 2003) has no serious equivalent on the Island of Ireland even in militant Protestantism (Southern 2005). Nor has the type of day-to-day existentialist threat posed by Iran and Syria-backed Hizbullah (Devenny 2006).

There is one more differentiating factor to be noted in comparisons of violence in both situations: the thirty years of conflict in Northern Ireland has not produced one suicide terrorist, Republican or Loyalist. The Cold War doctrine of mutually assured destruction is clearly lost on Islamist activists, both at the macro and micro levels.

Reactive Nationalism Expressed through Violence

I decided to return the serve

Loyalist paramilitary David Irvine explaining his motivation for taking up arms against the Provisional IRA

The violence of reactive nationalism sits well within the general features of reactive nationalism described earlier: it is, by and large, pragmatic, personal, particular and popular. In interviews, Northern Irish Republican paramilitaries are

seen to be recruited as much by peer pressure and local factors as by ideology (Mallie & Bishop 1993). Ideology, tradition, desperation, anger, self-defence, religious extremism, youthful exuberance, group dependence have all been cited in the Northern Irish case but, significantly, poverty has been omitted as a factor (Garfield 2005: 103-106). This type of reaction and counter-reaction was a feature of Jewish-Arab conflict in Palestine from the thirties and forties (Flapan 1987: 11).This is at variance, as noted above, with the reaction mediated by theological considerations. For example, the insertion of Islamist forces within the middle classes of Egyptian society, in the nineties, has no parallel in western European society, in modern times (Abdo 2000). Although there is, of course, a connection between the growth of Palestinian Islamist violence and the perceived failure of the secular Palestinian nationalist campaign, the origins of groups such as Hamas cannot be discussed from a strictly ideological perspective.

> One of the most ominous developments in the Palestine Problem and the Arab Israeli conflict in the last few decades is the growing prominence of its religious dimension. The year 1967, with the crushing Israeli military victory over Egypt, Jordan and Syria in a matter of hours, has been a watershed in this regard. On the one hand this victory dealt a coup de grace to secular Arab nationalism as espoused until then under the leadership of Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt. (Khalidi 2002).

The outgrowth of Hamas from a combination of mainstream Palestinian nationalism and Islamist ideology is a given (Levitt 2006: 8-32). It is the more 'mainstream' violent expressions of the various nationalisms that are under scrutiny here. Equally, we must differentiate between the two intifadas, in terms of the means, motivation and objectives of the Palestinian forces involved. The Palestinian intellectual, Sari Nusseibeh, sees the *al-Aksa* intifada in complete apposition to the first.

> With this latter explosion of violence, which began in 2000, I refuse to call this an intifada because it had neither a leadership, nor a vision, nor a plan. It was simply-in my opinion-a crazy

> expression of frustration and anger, totally useless, chaotic and certainly counterproductive, involving acts of violence and terrorism that only brought ruin to the Palestinian people and to our achievements. (Nusseibeh 2007)

The growth in suicide bombing from intifada to intifada, while there is a strong correlation with the growth in the Islamist influence on violence, is also related to a much more mundane fact : 'Suicide bombings are inexpensive and effective. They are less complicated and compromising than other kinds of terrorist operations. They guarantee media coverage. The suicide bomber is the ultimate smart bomb.' (Kalvas & Sánchez-Cuenca 2005: 231).

A few personal snapshots from different contexts may illustrate the reactive nature of nationalist (i.e., non-religious) violence. At the end of January, 1972, I witnessed the petrol-bombing, bombing by gelignite and eventual sacking of the British Embassy in Dublin. This was a violent, popular and particular reaction to the killing of 13 civilians by the Parachute Regiment of the British Army in Derry, a couple of days earlier. A couple of years later, at the end of a long hot summer working in Belfast, I was 'set up', to use the parlance of the time, in a Belfast pub by a group of Loyalist youngsters and, luckily, plucked from the situation by a brave barman who put his own wellbeing on the line. In the early nineties, stuck in a taxi, during a riot, on the Mt. of Olives, in Jerusalem, on my way back from Jericho, between the Israeli Border Police and Palestinian protestors, I was spotted by the Palestinian *shabab* and identified as '*yahud*' (Jew).

All these situations were both violent and reactive in nature and fulfilled the parameters already mentioned: pragmatic, personal, particular, popular. All were, in their various ways, manifestations of reactive nationalist violence at 'ground zero' level. Literature too reflects this reality, over time, though it may not always be apparent.

Reactive Nationalist Violence in Literature

Maupassant's *La Mere Sauvage* (Maupassant 1925), first published in 1873, is a classic example of reactive nationalist violence unmediated by ideological earnestness. It is predicated, instead, on swift and brutal revenge for a dead son. At first, the widow Victoire Simon, tends to the needs of the four young Prussian soldiers who occupy her house in Virelogne, in the year of 1869, with the grudging good grace of the vanquished. But when a letter arrives informing her of the death of her son, three weeks earlier, at the hands of the Prussian army – 'by a shell which almost cut him in two' – the change is silent and sudden and profound. Setting straw beds for the four blonde Prussian soldiers in the hay-loft, she burns them to death, waiting outside with a rifle to finish off anyone who might escape.

The following year, during the same Franco-Prussian conflict, the great Flaubert encountered another type of nationalism when his estate was seized. In this case, Flaubert railed against cold, calculated Prussian violence. Flaubert complains of 'these officers who break mirrors with white gloves on, who know Sanskrit, and who fling themselves on the champagne; who steal your watch and then send you their visiting card, this war for money, these civilized savages give me more horror than cannibals...if we take our revenge, it will be ferocious in the last degree; and, mark my word, we are going to think only of that, of avenging ourselves on Germany' (Steegmuller 1982: 170).

What Flaubert is highlighting here, unwittingly or otherwise, is the difference between the pre-meditated instrumental violence of the emergent 'elite' nationalism of Prussia and the instinctive, reactive nationalist violence of *La Mere Sauvage*. The former is a function of the top-down nationalist manifesto of the new Prussian elite; the latter is the revenge reaction at the level of rural France. We might note here too,

that it is a member of the landowning classes, in Flaubert's case, who is reacting in this 'primeval' way. Reactive nationalism, therefore, may be a cross-class reality.

The popular press too reflects these realities. In the great Zeppelin raids on Britain, in the 1915-1916, period, orchestrated from on high by the German navy, we see similar signs of reactive violence on the ground. The British popular press is full of talk of 'the Hun', popular novels and songs appear relating to the Zeppelin threat and a great commonality of feeling is stirred up by these 'unfair' attacks from the air. When the likes of Hans Mathy, hero captain of Zeppelin L30, eventually shot down over Barnet, in North London, comes dropping bombs on the capital, the dread of the Zeppelins gives way to anger, and collective anger at that. At one stage, a Zeppelin ditched in the sea is refused the succour usually accorded enemy combatants and a British fishing boat watches while the enemy aeronauts drown. It is not the rightness of the act that is at question in these instants but the pathetic reasonableness of the reactive nature of the revenge delineated.

Edna O'Brien's North/South Axis: The Context

It'll bring it all out into the open, so it will. Bring it all out into the open, sure...

Provisional I.R.A. volunteer commenting on the sectarian killing of twelve Protestant workers in Kingsmills, in South Armagh, in January 1976.

If we compare the Northern Irish Bernadette Devlin's biography *The Price of My Soul* (Devlin 1969), published at the start of the Northern Irish Troubles, with the southern Irish Maria McGuire's *To Take Arms: a Year with the Provisional I.R.A.* (McGuire 1973), published a couple of years afterwards, we notice a fundamental difference in the motivating force of both women: creed and class. Bernadette Devlin's life and works are essentially predicated on her coming of age as a Northern

Catholic of working-class background; Maria Maguire, on the other hand, makes her way into the ranks of violent Republicanism through the inherited standard issue *salon nationalism* of southern Ireland. In Northern Ireland, separated from the south since 1922, inter-generational Republicanism is more the order of the day (Garfield 2005). Edna O'Brien, as much astute commentator as novelist, seizes on this disconnect as the political fulcrum of her novel *The House of Splendid Isolation.*

> 'And now', I said.
> 'The South forgot us,', he said. Forlorn. Aggrieved. A likeness to those children in fable banished, exiled in lakes for hundreds of years, cut off from the homeland.
> 'Now there are two wars...One with the English and one with ourselves, ' I said.
> 'Sadly'...(O'Brien 1995: 99)

If we examine closely the lists of Republican combatants in 1916 and those in the Northern Troubles, two generations later, the difference is even starker. In the earlier Southern Irish scenario, the Republican participants are drawn, by and large, from across the classes. They range from the urban elites of Major John McBride and Countess Marciewicz to the members of James Connolly's Irish Citizens Army, who fought alongside Pearse's men. To put the difference more starkly, in the rising of 1916 the combatants 'read' their nationalism before they went into prison; in the Northern Irish situation, ideology came, by and large, after imprisonment. Writing of the emergence of serious violence in 19th century Belfast, Hirst notes

> The conflict was a working-class conflict, imported into Belfast by migrants from the Ulster countryside and reflected in the establishment and growth of the Orange Order and Ribbon society...the campaign for Catholic emancipation in 1828-1829 re-ignited tension in Ulster generally (Hirst 2002: 90).

Nevertheless the essentially northern 'Northern Irish troubles' still hinge, historically, around factors which cannot be gainsaid, however long an interval of time has passed: dispossession, expulsion and religious discrimination, to name but a

few. The facts of the plantation of Ulster, Leinster and Munster (the fourth province, Connacht, tended to be the damp diaspora to which the natives were sent, post Cromwellian plantation, on the heels of the 1641 rebellion) are both well known and increasingly well documented. The plantations differ, however, in many respects. The plantation of Ulster by, in the main, Scottish Protestants of Presbyterian hue, colours the situation in the eastern part of the island. The importation of mainly English colonists and soldiers into the southern part of the island - of less fundamentalist Church of England stock - meant that the southern Irish and northern Irish experiences of plantation and 'clearance' were quite different.

Imagined commonalities of history aside - and the nationalist narrative thrives on such simple stories of course - the situation in the North East of Ireland is further complicated, in modern times, by the fact that a large Protestant working class in Ulster faced off against an irredentist Catholic working class. This balance of sectarian terror, at working-class level, did not exist in the southern situation, although some have drawn attention to the fact that the southern Irish IRA campaign of the War of Independence was not quite as streamlined and free of the sectarian killings of Protestants as many southern Irish fondly imagine (Hart 2003: 223-258). Consequently, when the northern 'troubles' first broke out, in 1968 and 1969, the first street skirmishes tended to take place along the working class sectarian interfaces, in Derry and, not surprisingly, in West Belfast and North Belfast, where working class Catholics and Protestants had lived uncomfortably, cheek-by-jowl, from the great influx into Belfast, in the 1830's, during the industrial revolution. If the memory of dispersal and plantation is mediated in modern times at least, by Republican myth-making and ethnic window-dressing, the Scylla and Charybdis of

class and religion cannot be ignored for, without them, the violence of the northern Irish 'troubles' would not have had half its intensity.

When I think of those Northern bastards, I have nightmares all over again. The southern Republican lot were like little lambs, in comparison. But those Northern bastards, I hated them all!

Southern Irish Garda (police) officer recalling prison duty in Portlaoise Prison, during the time of the 1981 hunger strikes.

Edna O'Brien, in *The House of Splendid Isolation (1995)* explores another disconnect visible in the 'troubles': the growing gap between Republican and Nationalist sentiment, in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

> A war of a kind was going on, though no one admitted it, a war in bursts, young men coming down from up North, coming down to rob banks and post offices, post – mistresses in lonely stations in dread of their lives, ordinary folk too in dread of these faceless men with their guns and their hoods (O'Brien 1995: 9)

In the fifties, Northern Irish nationalists felt they could, initially at any rate, count on a sympathetic ear in the economically depressed and depressing south, even if words were rarely converted into action. Nevertheless, Operation Harvest, the earlier IRA campaign of 1956-1962, was wound down and arms dumped for lack of popular support among both the Catholic population in the North of Ireland and the general population in the South of Ireland. The 'famous' cross-border attack, memorialised in the Republican song *Sean South from Garryowen* on Brookeborough police barracks in Northern Ireland on New Year's Day 1957 was, apparently, betrayed in advance by alcohol-induced blathering by some southern worthies who were in on the planned attack. No reference to this uncomfortable fact is made in the lofty ballad, of course. Like whiskey drinkers, most nationalists like their *materiel* neat, undiluted by mundane facts such as economic depression and emigration in the south.

By the mid-seventies, particularly after the Loyalist Dublin and Monaghan bombings of May 1974, Northern Ireland, except on days of exceptional atrocities, seemed to have less and less relevance in the South of Ireland. The South of Ireland by that stage, so to speak, wouldn't have taken Northern Ireland as a gift on a golden plate. O'Brien explores this feature in *The House of Splendid Isolation* from a perspective coloured, no doubt, by her own interviews with the I.N.L.A. terrorist, McGlinchy, in Portlaoise prison.

O'Brien's novel deals with a fugitive Republican gunman, McGreevy, who falls for a landowner well above his station. If the details of the squalid love affair seem a little off though, the concept of the 'gunman on the run' was a very real one, in eighties Ireland. The case of Dessie Ellis, *aka* 'the Border Fox', is a case in point. At the time of the nationwide hunt for the 'Border Fox', I happened to be reading Naguib Mahfouz's *The Thief and the Dogs*, another tale of a fugitive politico-gunman. Mahfouz's novel suddenly seemed more tangible, in the light of the manhunt going on in southern Ireland. Eluding police and army, in the north and south, Ellis was finally stopped in his tracks in a shoot-out in North Kilkenny, in the south of Ireland, not too far from my father's ancestral farm. As hate-figures for southerners, and a figure of loathing even for many southern republicans, the 'Border Fox' and the late Dominic McGlinchy, informant for O'Brien's novel, are hard to beat. They represent a latter-day reflection of the northern-southern Irish Republican split detailed in Shaun Herron's popular novel *The Whore Mother* (Herron 1973), at the beginning of the troubles, where the hard, sectarian-tongued Northern Irish Catholic gunman comes up against his unsympathetic romantic Republican bedfellow in the south.

Edna O'Brien's novel, *The House of Splendid Isolation*, opens with the contrast between a southern Irish policeman (garda), Rory, and a Northern Irish Republican on the run. It is the nineties but it might as well be the Ireland of the War of Independence – flying columns, guerrilla tactics and nights spent in ditches.

> He scrapes the muck off with and end of a spade, drinks water from a pan that he found under a barrel, brackish and tasting of galvanise and then he lies down. His hunger has gone. If they come and find him that's it. But they won't break him. They know they won't. they know that. Jumpy lads, all lip, giving statements, one statement and then another and another. Can't take the heat. He can take anything, heat, cold, even the electric wires flaring his inner temples. The certainty runs deep. It has to. It's all he has left (O'Brien 1995: 18)/

Along the road, McGreevy relies on the hospitality of like-minded folk and others who must be browbeaten into supporting the 'movement.' Along the way, McGreevy finds shelter in the declining house of Josie, a once-wealthy landowner's wife. Josie has lived a loveless, perfunctory marriage with no issue. There is no love lost between man and wife.

> Up in the village, he is a gentleman, talks to people, buys buns for girls and sings a song is asked. When he isn't buying buns or cracking jokes, there is in his eyes, in all of him, a vacancy, like a lost stunned animal, far from home…days later he is carried back and in bed he groans and in the morning he mounts her with a lingual gusto, commandeers her inside and outside and still and feck it, she does not get with child (O'Brien 1995: 44-45)

An oft-cited Republican ballad, Florence M. Wilson's *The Man from God-Knows-Where*, which deals with the United Irishman Thomas Russell and the 1798 rebellion in Ulster, starts off with the appearance of a stranger in a country tavern.

> *Into our townlan', on a night of snow*
> *Rode a man from God-Knows-Where*
> *None of us bade him stay nor no*
> *Nor deemed him friend, nor damned him foe*
> *But we stabled his big roan mare*
> *For in our townlan' we're decent folk*
> *And if he didn't speak, why none of us spoke,*
> *And we sat till the fire burned low*

It is a classic image, one of the man who comes and goes in the night, keeps his own counsel and has 'desperate business' to do. Florence M. Wilson's ballad tells of the Protestant leader of the Republican United Irishmen, Thomas Russell, who was hanged in Downpatrick jail, after two abortive uprisings, in 1798 and 1803. It reflects a time when Presbyterians were strongly represented in the irredentist campaign in Ulster and before 'party spirit' (i.e., sectarianism), ensured that, for the most part, Republicanism and Nationalism came to be more associated with the Catholic population. The poem itself highlights the different course of nationalism in the north. While cultural nationalism, in the south, was very much bound up with Protestant middle-class scholarly activities, in the north, in the 18th century, violent Republicanism brought Catholic and Presbyterian together, if only temporarily, in the face of the perceived common enemies of England and Anglicanism. The furtive character referred to in the ballad, bears much the same characteristics as O'Brien's dark stranger: he is 'foreign' (i.e., from Northern Ireland), about secret business and not inclined to share his thoughts with anyone.

Kennedy-Andrews claims that O'Brien gives quite a sympathetic portrait of Frank McGreevy, the gunman on the run.

> Compared to earlier fiction such as Terence de Vere White's *The Distance and the Dark*, Eugene McCabe's *Victims*, Benedict Kiely's *Proxopera* or Brian Moore's *Lies of Silence*, *The House of Splendid Isolation* builds up, through the old woman's interactions with McGreevy, an increasingly sympathetic picture of the terrorist. The novel reflects O'Brien's own strong Republican sympathies. Patrick Magee tells us that 'McGreevy is a composite created from O'Brien's meetings with several republicans she visited in Portlaoise prison, although the main influence for the character is widely held to be Dominic McGlinchey.' McGlinchey became leader of the Irish National Liberation Army (INLA) in 1982 and, as the historian Tim Pat Coogan explains, was 'for a time the best – known Republican leader in Ireland. Some of the

> worst atrocities of the entire Troubles took place under him (Kennedy-Andrews 2003: 248-249).

The influence of Joyce and Faulkner, in particular, is evident in the telling. Not everyone is so thrilled about this influence. L'Heureux, takes O'Brien to task for her use of florid language 'After a brief invocatory prologue-in overwrought prose, a bad mistake-the novel opens like a political thriller.'(L'Heureux 1994).A sarkier comment still is provided by Hansen. Speaking of Josie, McGreavy's narrative counter- balance, he says 'If it sounds hackneyed, it is. O'Brien has handled a woman like this so often that she probably sighed with boredom throughout the writing, hence there's an off-hand, shuffled-up 'insert here' quality to these thwarted hopes and frustrated desires. We are in the realm of *Ryan's Daughter* and *The Thorn Birds*. But that is the past of the novel. The present is fresher and far more intriguing' (Hansen 1995). While the language is clearly at the disposal of the story, there is a slightly jarring lyrical quality about the narrative on occasions. Although O'Brien provides quite a nuanced range of characters – the politically-ambivalent Garda Rory, the old woman Josie, widow of an abusive, land-owning husband – much of the story is couched in a tone that strays a little too close, sometimes, to what might be called Celtic Kitsch, a sort of wan-faced, over-eager type of gush.

In the denouement, which sees McGreevy captured and Josie shot, we are left with a sombre, almost pathetic image of the inevitability of it all.

> 'We've had great success and great sadness,' he says and then crouches to say something to McGreevy. The men nudge and stiffen – two supremos who had tracked each other like polar animals, through bogland and mountain and quarries, face to face at last. He can hardly believe it, that this slight man who seemed to all the embodiment of twenty men is lying there in jeans and an orange vest with a sun – god on it. He remembers the night he chased him in Wexford and lost him on Vinegar Hill and lost him the next morning in a gypsy encampment where a woman stopped him, strewed branches to trip him up. He remembers everything,

> the hours and hours of overtimes, the phone calls, no sleep, not even being able to go to his sloop to think, clues, half clues, all consummating in this spectral tableau (O'Brien 1995: 210).

It is not a million miles away from the demise of Said Mahran, the criminal/terrorist, in Naguib Mahfouz's *The Thief and the Dogs*. The same sense of inevitability haunts the pages of both novels. The difference is, Mahfouz's anti-hero expires at the end; in O'Brien's novel, it is the hapless Josie, brutalised widow of a bad marriage and latter-day hostage to the wilder fringes of the Republican movement who takes the bullet.

At the end of *The House of Splendid Isolation*, it is the southerners, not the British, who, literally, call the shots. The message, unintentional or otherwise, is clear: the northern tail, Catholic or Protestant, does not wag the Southern Irish dog. The reality is, as the British slowly decouple from Northern Ireland over the coming years, it will be the South of Ireland that will – in the long term – foot the bill. And, as the southern state proved in the successive decades after independence, it has no intention of playing patsy to Northern Irish agendas, Republican or Loyalist. The war is over and no-one can be seen to win. There will be no united Ireland in the morning and neither will the great British public wear its government weighing in to shore up the ancient Loyalist malpractices of its erstwhile *Herrenvolk*.

The *Gombeen Man* meets the *Good Goy*: Love and War in Eli Amir's Yasmin

גורל אחד שם אותנו כן
שם אותנו כן בארץ הזאת

One fate brought us here, brought us here to this land

From the song 'One Fate', Ofra Haza.

In Irish social and political folklore, the *gombeen man* (Gaelic gaimbín) is a much maligned figure. Understood, in the earlier years of the twentieth century, as a mixture of shyster, ne'er-do-well gofor and political opportunist in small town Ireland, he represents a type sort of cross-cultural facilitator/fixer and general *'amil* (*Arabic*: collaborator). The classic gombeen man is a shrewder sort than Emil Habibi's co-opted collaborator Said, the Pessoptimist and more venial than David Grossman's Israeli soldier go-between Danny, in *The Yellow Wind* (Grossman 1988). We expect him to flourish in the 'blood diamond' economies of West Africa and so, indeed, he does. *Wasta*, the Arabic equivalent of Hebrew *protekzia*, is his watchword. The go-between must be all things, at all times, to all peoples. It would be unusual, not to say bizarre, if the Israeli-Palestinian debacle didn't throw up its own bottom-feeders, from both sides.

Eli Amir's *unterhero*, Nuri, in *Yasmin* (Amir 2005), is an Israeli of Iraqi Jewish descent, although recognizably a go-between and fixer for the new Israeli occupation of the West Bank, after the June war of 1967, if he is a *gombeen* man at all, is a conflicted one. The real apparatchiks are his Israeli boss, the minister, Mr. Haramti, the lord-of-all-he-surveys from the Ministry of the Interior office in Jerusalem, and the Shabak/Shin Beit (internal Israeli security services) operative,

Shamluck. Nuri is a decent, if naïve, human being. And he almost gets the good *goy* too, a Palestinian Christian, Yasmin, who is a widow and sometime Fatah *gofor* herself. For Nuri, love is war and war is a moveable feast.

One might be forgiven, initially at any rate, for logging *Yasmin* under the 'love across the barricades' rubric referred to by Magee (Magee 2000) and well represented in the Northern Irish 'troubles' novel. But Amir's novel is far from being a simple story of star-crossed lovers set against a background of barbed wire and barbed tongues. The affair in this love-in-war tale is only requited, in the final pages of the novel and, even then, it is really the beginning of the end rather than the end of the beginning, for Nuri al-Amiri and Yasmin al-Khilmi. The soul-crunching realities of the situation are too much for Yasmin even though, as a Christian Arab rather than a Muslim Arab, her relationship is less physically threatening to her than might otherwise be the case. Inevitably, the insecure Nuri is scarred by the cynicism and opportunism of those around him. In his final *faux pas*, he ends up suggesting publicly at a speech in his old kibbutz - and this is 1967, with all the attendant Israeli hubris - that the Palestinians should indeed have a state of their own. It is enough to have him upbraided by the minister. This criticism, along with the demise of his relationship with Yasmin, the death of Ghadir, a hapless shepherdess, and the realisation that the third woman in his life, Michelle, will not be returning to Jerusalem from Paris, causes him to quit his *gombeen* go-between post.

Nuri's essential powerlessness, in the new reality, is compounded by the fact that he is unable to save the Jordanian senator, Antoine, from being deported for making anti-Israeli statements. The novel opens with the senator applauding the arrival of 'Iraqi' soldiers in Jerusalem during the Six Day war only to find that the 'Arabs' are, in fact, Israelis.

> I wanted to go down to them, to offer them encouragement from his heart and to hear the stories of the heroic night they had just passed. But then a soldier with a torn shirt and bandaged arm approached the balcony. The soldier stooped forward, in a show of respect to the senator, took off his metal helmet, raised his ruddy head towards him and said: *Ihna Yahud...min hun*...(we are Jews...from here.) (Amir 2005: 13)

Several states of war are sketched out in *Yasmin* and these reflect the various levels present in the Israeli/Palestinian nexus: the Arab-Israeli War (the inter-state war: the June War/Six Days War of 1967), the Palestinian-Israeli War (the pre-Islamist local guerrilla campaign of *Fatah* in which the eponymous heroine, Yasmin, is peripherally involved) and the emergent Muslim-Jewish War (Muslim versus Jew, with Christian on the sideline). In effect, in *Yasmin*, the side on which one is born is the side to which one, naturally enough, adheres when the going gets tough. Or, as the old British rhyme would have it

And always keep a hold of nurse

For fear of finding something worse

Rationalisation is an add-on luxury that usually occurs after the fact of emotional and political alignment. There is no way out, in Yasmin's case, but out. And so, accordingly, after the final humiliation of yet another West Bank body search, within hours of finally lying with Nuri in the kibbutz, she returns to Paris.

The euphoria among Israelis, after the occupation of the West Bank, in June 1967 is the background against which *Yasmin* is set. Amir's thesis, and it holds some water, is that Israeli Jews of Arab origin, particularly in the first generation, had a more realistic take on 1967 than their then Ashkenazi superiors. Nevertheless, the sight of the hard-headed Israeli public being sucked into such hubris was a strange phenomenon. The feting of Naomi Shemer's lachrymose ballade *Jerusalem of Gold*, written before the war but taken up after the battle as some sort of mystical

envisioning of divine intervention, is a token of the sort of self-delusional optimism displayed by many of Nuri's fellow countrymen - an optimism which Nuri, despite his workaday ethic, does not share.

ירושלים של זהב	*Jerusalem of gold*
ושל נחושט ושל אור	*Of brass and of light*
הלא לכול שיריך	*For all your songs*
אני כינור	*I am a harp*

Interestingly, a similar hubris was widespread in the South of Ireland, circa 1966, with the fiftieth anniversary of the 1916 Insurrection. A popular song of the time, *We're All off to Dublin in the Green*, reinforced simplistic southern ideas that it was just a question of the North of Ireland 'seeing sense' before it was bolted onto the south, so to speak, and the dreamland of a united Ireland ensued. The minor matter of Northern Irish Protestant dissent from the grand plan was stealthily airbrushed out of the delusion.

Nuri's hard-headed realism is based largely on the fact that culturally, linguistically and, from a confessional point of view, he is the ultimate go-between (and outsider): a Sephardic Jew in a (then) Asheknazi-dominated society; a Jew of the Arab east, among Arab Muslims and Christians. And a Hebrew speaker whose heart reverberates to Arabic language and song to boot. There are ominous portents in *Yasmin* which suggest that not only is the war not over, but that the war will go on and on, if in different keys. Explosions start to take place around Jerusalem, particularly in the Mahane Yehuda market, in West Jerusalem. A new name, Yasser Arafat, appears, in place of that of the discredited Ahmad Shukeiry. When Nuri's uncle Hizkael is finally released from an Iraqi jail, he is debriefed by the Israeli secret service to see where the Iraqis stand in terms of the international fight. (This is

just six years before the hubris was finally done to dust, of course, during the 1973 Yom Kippur war). The three women in Nuri al-Amiri's life, Yasmin, the Christian Palestinian returnee, Ghadir, the hapless Muslim shepherdess, in East Jerusalem, and Michelle, the French Jewish immigrant, parallel, at a remove, the three strands of the conflict mentioned above. Neither in love, nor in war, are there great grounds for optimism though.

This is 1960's Israel and Amir's narrative is pockmarked with contemporary signposts: the old labour kibbutzniks, the power of the Histadrut labour organisation, the feting of the prisoners-of-Zion (the ones from Russia more than the ones from Iraq, as Amir points up) and the vanity projects, such as the vineyard proposed by Michelle's boyfriend on the West Bank. All that is missing are those Time-Life images of 'the generals' swanning around Tel Aviv. Of General Dayan indulging his amateur archaeologist hobby and the thousand-and-one feelgood photo opps. Although Nuri and Yasmin grow closer, she insists on conducting their relationship in English, citing Franz Fanon to the effect that 'the meaning of speaking a particular language, above all else, is to encourage its culture' (Amir 2005:309.) This totemic use of a 'neutral' language says much about the nature of power in the novel. Nuri himself, a fluent Hebrew speaker, is still intimidated by his own seeming inarticulateness in the face of a new Hebrew writer (Amir 2005:357), while he has to help his uncle, Hizkael, recently escaped from Iraq, to master the register necessary for public speaking.

The Iraqi writers most prominent on the Israeli literary scene, Eli Amir, Sami Michael and Shimon Ballas, have all dealt in various ways with the multi-faceted nature of their own Jewish-Israeli-Arab inheritance (Berg 1996). Eli Amir's contribution, in *Yasmin*, is more on the humanist level. There is something

frighteningly pathetic and attractive about the disinterested decency of Nuri al-Amari that makes us realise that, in Eli Amir's words, 'an opportunity was lost in 1967'. Perhaps, had those Israeli Jews of Arabic origin been present, at a higher level, among the post-1967 Israeli *nomenklatura*, things might have been different. There might have been some way of squaring the circle between Abu Nabil, the Muslim businessman in the novel, Abu George, Yasmin's Christian father, and the new rulers of Jerusalem. Or maybe that is simply wishful thinking, the notion that being closer to one's enemy gives one an edge in understanding.

The night of love, as opposite to Senator Antoine's night of war, when it comes for Nuri and Yasmin, is brief, primeval in tenor and, tellingly, as bloody as the war which precedes it.

> I am not a conqueror. I don't want to conquer. I just want to live you. To love you. To go unto you with a silken caress. To stroke you tenderly, with gentle breath, with the destruction of the eager body. Her groin was stained with blood and I wallowed in her blood. 'I have my period', she apologised. I went unto her and entered into her deepest parts, above and below, without hesitation, with a sort of pity that I had never known before. She cried out and embraced me in her warm spring. I drew from within her a sweetness without end. Planted my essence in her. My milk and my seed. My soul and my death, and was assimilated into her. Both of us were as one, clasped together, twisted together, joined together, breathing together. We were as one flesh. I wanted to say to her, in Hebrew or in Arabic or in all of the languages of the world, all the words of love that I had dreamed of saying for a year but the release and the swooning made me forget everything. I slept in her, sleeping the deepest sleep I had slept in my life. We woke early, between darkness and light, and with eyes that had still not opened, I covered her face with kisses.
> 'I love you, Yasmin. It's wonderful being with you.'
> 'I love you, Nuri. Your thoughts and your feelings and your words and your enthusiasm. Your skin and your smell and your sweat.'
> 'Are you ready to live with me?'
> 'Are you proposing marriage to me, my love?'
> 'It's possible?'
> I had never said such a thing to any woman before. She buried her head in my chest and wept. My eyes too flooded with tears. (Amir 2005: 393)

All has ended, much as we might expect, in blood and in tears. We know it cannot be. The best that can be hoped for, in such situations, is a sort of side-by-side life. A Swiss cantonisation of love and death, of religion and of nationality. And love cannot flourish in such a climate. Nuri, at the end of the novel, is left without hope in either love or war, a wandering optimist crushed by the new realities. We understand, nevertheless, that he will go on although Yasmin's own weighty conclusion, set down in a letter from Paris, admits of no simple love-across-the-barricades ending.

> חלמתי לעזוב הכל ללכת בעקבות אהבה...הבנתי כי אינך שלי
>
> ולעולם לא תהיה, אתה שייך לעם שלך ולמדינה שלך...
>
> I dreamed of leaving everything and of following love...(but) I understood that your were not mine and would never be, you belong to your people and to your state...(Amir 2005: 411)

Contextualising the Conflict: The Western Galilee in the Light of Other Clearances

> When asked about *Bab al-Shams* (Gate of the Sun), I said that the victorious write history and the defeated stories. But actually I think that the novel can only fill gaps. It does not replace writing history, and it is not its role to do so. You do not write literature to fill gaps. Literature is art, and when art is pushed to fill gaps it is no longer good art. Art always reveals other things to us than sciences do. The whole concept of time is different in art (Mejkher 2001).

The Western Galilee and Southern Lebanon lie at the heart of the Palestinian *ur-narrative* of the War of 1948. If we look at satellite images of the region, we notice how seamlessly the East African rift valley, to its east, melds into the rougher, coarser landscape of Southern Lebanon (Campbell 1999). Topography is theatre here: the Palestinians dispossessed in April 1948, as part of *Tochnit Dalet* or, later

on, in October 1948, during Operation *Hiram*, crossed from the Galilee into southern Lebanon in their flight from war and despoilation. And then they tried to cross back again.

The essential connectedness of Northern Israel/Palestine and Lebanon is as ancient as the history of the peoples of the Near East. Aharoni posits, following the biblical narratives, settlement by the Israelite tribes of Asher and Naphtali as far north as the line stretching East-West, from Laish (Dan), in the foothills of Mt. Hermon, to Tyre, on the Syrio-Lebanese coast (Aharoni, 1979). A much earlier work, predicated on the 19th century Christian *Drang nach Osten* to rediscover The Holy Land, George Adam Smith's *The Historical Geography of the Holy Land* (1894) points up the territorial contiguity of both Palestine and Syria-Lebanon, in a chapter entitled 'Syria's Place in History.' From ancient Ugarit, on the Lebanese coast, with its proto-alphabetic cuneiform script, to the early Aramaic inscriptions in Dan itself, we are looking at an age-old continuum of conquest and settlement and conquest. That is to say, armies and the objects of their malign attention have been wandering back and forth between Southern Lebanon and Northern Palestine from time immemorial.

The situation obtaining today, with the increasing enlargement of 'Hizbullistan', to the north of the State of Israel, and to the south and west, in the form of 'Hamastan', goes back, ultimately, to the realities of 1948, even though these phenomena presume both the rise of radical Islamism and the Iranian revolution. Zubaida, comparing Pan-Arab nationalism, Islamic nationalism and nation-state nationalism, comes to the conclusion that 'The rivals of nation-state for solidarities and sentiments are not the universalist entities of Arabism and Islam, but more likely

particularistic and factional solidarities of community and region' (Zubaida 2004: 420). That is to say, the local is, ultimately, the universal.

The most dramatic events of 1948 took place, by and large, not in Jerusalem or the cities of Haifa, Akko and Jaffa, but in the Western Galilee. Smyth, writing of the plantation of Ireland in the seventeenth century, notes that 'The forging of this story also involves negotiating and mediating between conflicting interpretations and forms of evidence' (Smyth 2006: 18). Conflicting interpretations of what happened, in 1948, cause controversy even among Israeli commentators themselves. One thing is clear: the war of 1948 resulted in the *clearance* of a large section of the (mostly Muslim) population of the Western Galilee to Lebanon and further East. The word *clearance* is used advisedly here, from the point of view that, seen from this distance, the expulsion/flight from the western Galilee, in spring and autumn of 1948, has resonances with the Highland Clearances of the 18th and 19th century Scotland. In this respect, we have returned to the scene of land lost and pined for. Parallel tales of dispossession - Palestinian, Irish and South African - have been dealt with, inter alia, by the likes of Mitchell who, in the Israeli, Northern Irish and South African cases, points up the confessional connection between occupation and dispossession (Mitchell 2004).

Sean O'Tuama, in *An Duanaire, 1600-1900: Poems of the Dispossessed* (O'Tuama 1981), cites a popular 17th century Gaelic lament relating to the Cromwellian *clearances*, which saw many native Irish Catholics deprived of their lands, after the rising of 1641, and sent to the wetlands of Connacht.

A Dhia atá Fial, a thríath na mbeannachta
God Who art generous, O Prince of blessings
Féach na Gaeil go léir gan bharánta;
Behold the Gael, stripped of authority

Má Táimid ag triall siar go Connachta,
Now as we journey Westward into Connacht
Fágmaid 'nár ndiaidh fó chian ar seancháirde
Old friends we'll leave behind us in their grief (O'Tuama 1981: 109)

O'Tuama cites another poem, by one Fear Dorcha O Melláin, of County Down, noting that the comparison between the plight of the Irish and that of *Israel's people* is a commonplace of seventeenth century poetry. O'Tuama notes too, in connection with the dispossession and expulsion, that 'All Catholics (and many Protestant Royalists) above the rank of tradesman or labourer were to remove themselves and their families to Connacht and Clare, where they were given small allotments. Any of those ordered away found East of the Shannon after May 1st, 1654, might be killed by whoever met them. The move had to be made mostly in winter. The season was severe, and the roads almost impassable. Hundreds perished on the way.' (O'Tuama 1981: 109).

It is this nostalgia and *Heimweh* for land lost, that is common to Irish, Israeli and Palestinian traditions. The Israeli national anthem, *Ha-Tikva*, the Palestinian National Anthem, *Biladi*, and the Irish national anthem, *Amhrán na bhFiann* tap into this particular *topos*.

بلادي بلادي

بلادي يا أرضي يا أرض الجدود

My country, my country,
My country, my land, land of my ancestors

להיות עם חופשי בארצינו ארץ ציון וירושלים
To be a free people in our land, the land of Zion and Jerusalem

Fé mhóid bheith saor
Seantír ár sinsear feasta
Ní fhágfar fén tíorán ná fén tráill

Sworn to be free
No more our ancient sire land
Shall shelter the despot or the slave

This *Heimweh*, re-imagined at the Gellnerian level, in official nationalist format, is predicated on loss of name and of place. It is reasonable then, that return, whether Jewish, Palestinian, or native Irish, whether to a poorly-imagined past or a mythologized community, is an *emotional reality* that cannot be denied. We can no more disavow the reality – as opposed to the mechanism of its outworking – of the emotional (as opposed to the national- religious) thrust of the Return to Zion than we can the hurt and harm that lies beneath the *al-Nabka* narratives of the Western Galilee. It is this mixture of memory and longing, culled from oral accounts of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, that is the binding force behind Khoury's *Gate of the Sun* (Khoury 2005). And there is no denying the reality of the *clearances* of the Galilee, in particular during Operation Hiram, in the autumn of 1948, and the corollary of the prevention of return, pointed up by others.

> Partly for security reasons, partly under pressure from Jewish communities that had already taken abandoned Arab property with an eye to space for incoming Jewish refugees, Israeli leaders moved towards a decision between April and August 1948, to bar the return of the refugees. For those accustomed to a pattern of leaving trouble through a swinging door that would soon bring them home, the Israeli ban became a disaster. The Israeli government destroyed most of the approximately 350 abandoned Arab villages and towns, and arguing that the concept of land ownership was meaningless in a total war, Ben-Gurion initiated the allocation of the refugees' land to Jews. Through the middle of 1949, Israeli leaders also established about 130 new Jewish settlements where Arab villages and towns had stood, most to be populated by European victims of the Holocaust and Jews fleeing Arab countries, pouring into Israel following its declaration of independence (Kimmerling and Migdal 1992: 155)

Equally, the fact that maximalist Islamic groups and their international backers utilise the inter-generational misery of the Palestinians dispossessed in 1948, is scarcely an excuse to deny - even if we differ about describing - what happened: *clearances*. The Israeli politician Schlomo Ben-Ami has reached much the same conclusion.

> The decision about whether of not the mass exodus of Palestinians was the result of a Zionist design or the inevitable consequence of war should not ignore the ideological constructs that motivated the Zionist enterprise. The philosophy of transfer was not a marginal, esoteric article in the mindset and thinking of the main leaders of the Yishuv...Ben-Gurion did not have to issue particular orders for expulsion. Rather, he established the strategic-ideological framework for the war effort. 'Certainly there will be great changes in the composition of the population of the country,' he said in the wake of the Arab exodus from west Jerusalem and later from Haifa. (Ben-Ami, 2005: 44-45)

If Ben-Artzi's *Early Jewish Settlement Patterns in Palestine, 1882-1914*(1998) gives us a tidy account of the first-footing of Zionist settlement in Palestine, Gvati's *A Hundred Years of Settlement* (1985) expands that account to the 1980's and Khalidi's *All That Remains* (1992) gives us a detailed account of the Palestinian villages 'occupied and depopulated' in 1948, a book such as Yaffa Eliach's *There Once Was a World* (1999), with its account of the eradication of a Jewish community in a Lithuanian village during Operation Barbarossa, sets the War of 1948 in another context, one which Khoury himself highlights, in *Gate of the Sun*. From a Palestinian perspective, the *Shoah* cannot be ignored. This is not special pleading on behalf of the Israeli enemy but a belated recognition of the connectedness of things, by a writer from the far side of the fence.

Elias Khoury's novel *Gate of the Sun* bears literary witness, in its wordy, wandering way, to the distracted narratives of *al-Lajiin* (the refugees), those who

fled. An important part of Khoury's message is: stating the truth is a duty but what you do with the truth is an equally important duty.

Gate of the Sun: Ilyas Khouri's War of 1948 Narrative

فلسطين كانت المدن حيفا و يافا و القدس و عكاهنال كنا نشعر بوجود شي اسمه فلسطين
(Khoury 2000: 189)

Palestine was the cities-Haifa, Yaffa, Al-Quds and Acre. Here we felt the presence of something called Palestine (Khoury 2005: 177)

Ilyas Khouri's novel, *Gate of the Sun*, set between the Western Galilee (as Palestine and Israel) and Southern Lebanon, although couched, for the most part, in *fusha*, is the fruit of countless hours of conversation with witnesses to the War of 1948 and its aftermath. If the narrative may appear, at times, unfocused and weighed down with *longeurs* in certain sections, it is, for the most part, a reflection of the validity that random memory throws up. *Gate of the Sun*, while not exactly being the *Ulysses* of the Palestinian *Nakba,* can indeed make some claim to being the Palestinian *As I Lay Dying* (Faulkner 1930) even if Khoury himself, a Lebanese Christian, is writing at a temporal and cultural remove from the War of 1948.

> Because of my novel *Bab al-Shams*, some people think that I am Palestinian but of course I have never lived through anything like that. My personal experience is very limited although I was a *fida'i* [activist] in the 1960s and 1970s. I did a lot of research to write this novel. I went into the camps and asked the people to tell me their stories. It was like a journey. (Mejkher 2001).

As with most wars, of course, it is the poor and powerless, the Palestinian *fellahin* in the War of 1948, who get left behind. In this respect, *Gate of the Sun* is more a novel of the grass that gets trampled than the elephants that trample it. Several sacrosanct Palestinian myths are undermined in *Gate of the Sun*, the sanctity

of the revolution (الثورة)being but one of them. And yet, despite this understandably sour take on things, one essential note rings true: the sense that the Palestinian people were in the wrong place, at the wrong time, as the juggernaut gathered momentum, on the heels of the Holocaust. The chaos and incompetence on the part of the Arab and Palestinian forces, in 1947 and 1948, pointed up earlier in Yahya Yakhlif's *A Lake Behind the Wind,* is matched here by the sense of a people, particularly the rural *fellahin,* without leadership, who were left to fend for themselves when their betters weighed anchor, literally, for Beirut, Alexandria and further afield.

War, love and their discontents are located in *Gate of the Sun,* for the most part, in the Galilee and, more particularly, in the Western Galilee. The destruction and evacuation/dispersal from such villages as Kuweikat, in the district of Acre, a central point in the novel, is accurately reflected in other sources, in particular, in Khalidi's mapping of the expulsions and destruction of villages (Khalidi1992), in Nazzal's early groundbreaking account of the fall and flight from the Galilee (Nazzal 1976) and in Morris's detailed analysis of the military campaigns of 1947 and 1948 (Morris, 2004). Nazzal, in his article concentrates on the six villages of al-Sumeiriya, al-Bassa, al-Zib, al-Ghabsiyya, Kabri and al-Birwa in his interviews with refugees. The last three form an important part of Ilyas Khoury's narrative.

The Western Galilee was originally omitted as part of the Jewish state from the U.N. Partition plan of 1947. By implication then, the importance of the conquest and 'clearing' of the Galilee, when it was included in the State of Israel, cannot be underestimated. Among Palestinians within the State of Israel, the centrality of the 'Galilee narrative' is well established (Humphries 2004: 213-232). A tradition has begun to build up of visiting the ruined/abandoned villages (Wakim, W. & Beidas 2001). If the Negev was to be the 'legs' of the new state, then the Galilee was its

'lungs', with sufficient agricultural land to accommodate many new settlements. The trekking back and forth ('infiltrating') between Southern Lebanon and the Western Galilee, is the via dolorosa of the novel. Younes, the *feday*, and Naheelah's love life is centred on this toing and froing to the *Gate of the Sun* of the title. Love lies back over the border, in the lost land of the Western Galilee.

What is missing in all of the above accounts, of course, and what is provided by Khoury, is a novelised account of the War of 1948 narratives told, *hakawati* (oral folk narrator)-style, by an exiled Palestinian in Lebanon. Facts on the ground are one thing; it is the feelings on the ground which add the human gloss even if some, such as Tamari, find the over-sentimentalisation of the War of 1948 hard to take (Tamari 2002). Khouri's *Sheherezadian* technique of having the young medic in colloquy with the semi-comatose *feday*, Younes, husband of Naheelah, provides the framework for a tale of love and war and the awkward spaces in between. As with the attentive psychologist listening for the 'tone' of the telling, it is the general tenor of the narrative that enriches the story, rather than the particular details. We can forgive the digressions because, at a certain subliminal level, we realise that they reflect the distracted, disconnected narratives of the refugees themselves, although not all are as understanding.

> The whole of the Galilee collapsed between Dekel and Hiram and we had no idea. The Dekel plan began with the occupation of Kaswan on 9 June 1948. Then El Mukur, El Jdeideh, Abu Sinan, Kafar Yassif and El Kweikat were occupied. On 13 June they occupied Nazareth and then Ma'loul, linking Kafar ha-Horesh with the rest of the settlements south of Nazareth. On 15 June an Israeli unit moved from Shafa Amar and occupied Saffouri, and a thorough mopping-up operation followed that led to the occupation of El Bruwweh...we stayed up to the end of Operation Hiram, on the night of 28 September, which concluded with the fall of the whole of the Galilee in sixty hours (Khoury 2005: 176)

The overall picture is clear: 'fall' 'collapse', 'occupation', 'mopping-up', Even though Khoury insists that 'Palestine was the cities - Haifa, Jaffa, Jerusalem and Acre' - it is the fall of the rural hinterland that touches the heart the most. The general picture is set against the personal accounts of flight.

> I ran to the village, carrying my English rifle, and when I got to the house, there were flames everywhere. I swear, I didn't even have time to bury my wife and children. I was driven, with everyone else who fled, from Saffouri to El Ramah and from El Ramah to El Bqei'ah and from El Bqei'ah to Suhmata, then to Deir El Qasi and finally to Bint Jbeil in Lebanon (Khoury 2005: 82)

The criticism, coming from a top-down perspective, that values written records over orality, is slanted, of course, in favour of the victor. Refugees, by and large, do not have the luxury of keeping notebooks. Nevertheless, it is the *emotional validity* of the accounts woven into the narrative of the *feday* Younes, and his wife Naheelah, that carry the most sway. We are not in the field of facts here but of feelings. In this respect, *Gate of the Sun* straddles a few genres: it is a sort of bio-novel.

Just as the refugees' path northwards to Lebanon is familiar, so too is the geography of the Western Galilee. The tableaux of fallen towns and villages is a palimpsest of names familiar in the War of 1948 narrative: al-Kweikat, al-Ghabsiyya, Suhmata, Kabri, Some towns, such as Abu Sinan, are spared and, in fact, become either way-stations on the refugees road or permanent homes. The 'lungs' of Acre, the towns and villages to its east along the Acre-Nahariyya road, disappear, one by one, until the final reckoning, during Operation Hiram, in September-October 1948. But the need to return is deep, even if all that remains is a pile of stones and a clutch of olive trees.

> There you were pretending that you wanted to explore Galilee inch by inch, but you were lying. You didn't explore Galilee. On the contrary, you just kept hovering around Deir El Asad and making a circuit of Sha'ab, El Kabri and El Ghabsiyyeh. You lived among

> the ruins of the villages and would go into the abandoned houses and eat their stocks of food...(Khoury 2005: 56)

In Khoury's novel, Naheelah stays behind, in the Galilee, while her *feday* spouse, Younes, visits her, from time to time, in the troglodytic comfort of the cave they call *Bab al-Shams*, above the village of Deir el-Asad, in Northern Israel. The unifying effect - long-term - of the expulsions from the Galilee is a tangible indicator of reactive nationalism at work. The situation of 'present absentees', those Palestinians outside the State of Israel when the borders were officially closed, is glossed here and along with the new settlements which sprang up after independence and the desire to take instant revenge - the heart of reactive nationalism which has no need of books or oratory or imagined communities.

> It was night. The spotlight revolved, tracking the barbed-wire fence, and you hid in the olive grove close by. You started moving closer, crawling on your stomach. You got the chain of grenades ready and tied them to a detonator, deciding to throw them into the big unfinished hall where the Yemeni Jewish families slept practically on top of one another. You wanted to kill, just to kill. When you described the event to Dr. Mu'een, you said that during your third pass you imagined the dead bodies piled on top of one another and felt pleased (Khoury 2005: 64).

But Younes, the *feday*, does not carry out his plan. Not because of some moral imperative but through a mixture of concern for the repercussions on the local Palestinian villages and out of personal fear. We are in the third generation of narration and nation now: the era of Kanafani, the first generation after the War of 1948 is well past. So too is the generation of Jabra and Habibi. Black September, two Intifadas, the Lebanese civil war and the 'War of the Camps' have passed as well. It is now time to size up one's own side. While Naheelah stumbles from pregnancy to pregnancy, Younis, the *feday*, flits back and forth between Lebanon and the Galilee. The message is a complex one: both the sacred image of the Palestinian woman as

long-suffering 'martyr's martyr' and her status as one of *al- baqiin* (those who remained) are targets. If Khoury, like his narrator Khalil, sitting beside the bed of the comatose *feday* Younes, takes all day to get to the point, the point, by and large, is worth making. The street heroes of the first generation can often mutate into the house devils of the third generation. Love, in *Gate of the Sun*, is quite literally, across the border.

> When Naheelah finally came to the cave of Bab al-Shams, she was afraid of you because she found you looking for a corpse. She came carrying food, water and clean clothes, found you lying on your belly and smelled the smell. Your foul smell, like that of a dead animal, filled the cave. She tried to wake you. She bent over you and listened to your rasping breath. She tried to wake you again, taking hold of your shoulders and attempting to make you sit up, but you fell over backward (Khoury 2005: 125)

This is more like the grubby reality of Irish nationalism represented in Ken Loach's 2006 film of the Irish War of Independence (in Southern Ireland), *The Wind that Shakes the Barley*. The reality of IRA 'flying columns' sleeping out in damp barns, the sickness, the hunger and the constant threat of capture or of death are all there. There is little of the charm of the freedom-fighter here and more of the brute mechanics of reaction. In flashback, micro-narratives of the clearances slip in.

> There the firing started from the rampart that dominates the villages. The Jews were hiding behind the barrier, and the firing began, and people got scared and returned in defeat to El Kweikat and Amqa. I lost my mother and didn't know how to find her. She'd gone off with the donkey towards Amqa, and I kept going towards El Kweikat, running and shouting, and then suddenly there was a man standing in the middle of the road with a donkey holding its head directly in line with the firing while the man stood at the donkey's tail…(Khoury 2005: 290)

The chaos of the telling complements the chaos of the collapse.

One of the strongest scenes in *Gate of the Sun* is the encounter between Umm Hassan, the camp midwife, and Eli Dweik, the Israeli woman who has occupied her house, on the ruins of Kweikat, in the northern Galilee. Kibbutz ha-Bonim was built on the ruins of the Palestinian town of Kweikat. The kibbutz was later renamed Beit Ha-Emeq and 'settled with Jewish immigrants from England, Hungary and the Netherlands' (Khalidi 1992: 22). The scene is full of irony and understatement. The sting in the tale is that the Palestinian, returning home can never really go home and that the Israeli woman who has taken her place longs, in reality, for her own 'homeland', in Beirut.

In a reprint of his seminal work, *al-Nakba, Why Did the Palestinians Leave? An Examination of the Zionist Version of the Exodus of 1948*, written just eleven years after the War of 1948, Khalidi cites Yigal Allon, head of the Palmach, as quoted in *Sefer Ha-Palmach* (The Book of the Palmach). 'There were left before us only five days before the threatening date, the 15th of May. We saw a need to clean the inner Galilee and to create a Jewish territorial succession in the entire area of the upper Galilee...the Arab flight which reached great numbers made it easier on our forces to supervise vast areas and was a burden to the enemy who had to put all of its efforts into the absorption and organisation of the refugees.' (Khalidi 1959: 42-43)

Khalidi mentions an incident which Khoury glosses in *Gate of the Sun*..

> We were awakened by the loudest noise we had ever heard. Shells exploding and artillery fire...the whole village was in panic...women were screaming, children were crying...most of the villagers began to flee with their pyjamas on. The wife of Qassim Ahmad Sa'id fled carrying a pillow in her arms instead of her child...(Khalidi 1992: 22)

In this temporary return, Umm Hassan is brought by her brother, Fawzi, with his son, to visit the site of the ruined village and her house- which is still standing. They

video the experience. Umm Hassan finds the Jewish Israeli woman, Eli, living in her old house in Beit Ha-Emeq. Eli shows no surprise at the arrival of the three strangers.

> The Israeli woman left her in front of the water jug and returned with a pot of Turkish coffee. She poured three cups and sat calmly watching these strangers whose hands shook as they held their coffees. Before Umm Hassan could open her mouth, the Israeli woman asked, 'It's your house, isn't it?'
> 'How did you know?'
> 'I've been waiting for you for a long time. Welcome.' (Khoury 2005: 97).

They speak in Arabic, the language of the Israeli woman's Beiruti childhood. Umm Hassan refuses the gift of a water pitcher clearly left behind from her flight, many years before. Eventually, Umm Hassan takes the gift of the water jug and leaves it in her brother's house, in nearby Abu Sinan. She will not carry the token of her lost homeland back with her to the slums of Beirut. The motif is taken up by Adnan, who is captured after an attack in the Galilee, in 1965: 'This is the land of my fathers and forefathers. I am neither a saboteur nor an infiltrator. I have returned to my land' (Khoury 2005: 127).

War's Old Sweet Song

The 1967 June war which provides the starting-point of the narrative in Eli Amir's *Yasmin* prefigures the emergence of a Greater Israel and the grafting of the poisoned chalice of the West Bank of the Jordan onto the Israeli body politic. The war is over; the war rolls on. With the Arab defeat in the war, a new phase in Palestinian nationalism begins. All this is set against the almost wilful naïveté of many of the Israelis/new immigrants. It is as though they do not wish to believe the evidence of their eyes. Nuri is the exception here. He is cursed both with perceptiveness and with straddling the linguistic/cultural/ethnic/religious borders. A

Sephardic Jew of Iraqi origin, he is immune to both the blandishments of his own bosses and the propaganda of the nationalists on the Palestinian side. But one thing he does know: a hurt has been done (first *al-Nakba* of 1948 and then *al-Naksa* of 1967) and that dignity has been undone. And that the war, unlike love, will go on.

Edna O'Brien's *The House of Splendid Isolation* calls time both on Southern Irish pieties and Northern Irish certainties. A story that is predicated on the conflict between two takes on the IRA struggle, and which seems to highlight both southern infidelity to the cause and northern steadfastness, shows us that there are no givens in the three-hundred-year old row. The south - and this is pre-economic boom – has moved on (and is now moving on again as global recession bites). Self-interest, stability and simple tedium with the 'northern nightmare' have all conspired to turn the southern population away from intellectual, social or emotional engagement with the troubles over the border. From O'Brien's novel, it is clear that the greatest enemy of Irish unity, in modern times, is as much the population of the Republic of Ireland as it is the British government or, indeed, the Loyalist population of Northern Ireland. One thing is certain: it is easier to make someone (i.e., the Loyalist/British population of Northern Ireland) hate you than make someone (i.e., the southern Irish population) love you. Amnesia has given way to indifference which has, in turn, given way to outright hostility to the sacred project of unification / re-unification.

Ilyas Khouri's novel *Gate of the Sun*, a Palestinian novel written by a Lebanese Christian, marks a certain coming of age both in that writer's *oeuvre* and in the Palestinian novel itself. As with Kanafani and Jabra, of the first generation after *the War of 1948*, it addresses the realities of the war of 1948 and the clearances of the Palestinians from, in the case of *Gate of the Sun*, the Western Galilee. Khouri's brief is broader, however. In presenting the Palestinian case, almost two generations

on, he picks holes in the seamless image of the *feday*. He is treading dangerous ground, politically, when he criticises the targeting of civilians in terror attacks. His parodic treatment of a French film crew coming to the refugee camp of Shatila is both the material of black humour and the bold belly-laugh. In re-iterating the narratives of *al-Nabka* and placing them in their geographical context, he is re-telling a story that must be re-told. By criticising the playing out of the *reactive nationalist* project in the first and second generations after the dispersal, he is allowing himself the sort of latitude rare enough among post-independence writers in the first generation. The ugly face of war and dispersal visible in *Gate of the Sun* is age old. What Khoury does is humanise the story beyond the abstract expression in political tracts. In this respect, he is following in the footsteps of Kanafani, the father of the post-War of 1948 novel.

Chapter 5

Religion

Is Religion a Country?

Do you hear the drums? The natives are restless tonight…
Northern Irish Catholic listening to Protestant Orange Order Band, Belfast July 1980

The main revealed religions of the Middle East have many elements in common: a book, a prophet(s), a complex connection with land, a credo (the shema Israel, the shahada, the Pater Noster), a monotheistic message and so forth. We might also add, a visceral connection, in the case of Judaism and Islam, to their respective liturgical languages, a blend of the transcendent, a written tradition of war for the faith and a mandate, if not from heaven, then from the holy book. While it is taken for granted, among mainstream adherents of Judaism and Christianity, that the notion of the revealed book is circumscribed with difficulties, such is not the situation within the broad Umma of Islam, as Lester points out in an essay on the recent discovery of Quranic manuscripts in the Yemen.

> The Koran (sic) is a text, a literary text, and the only way to understand, explain and analyze it is through a literary approach, Abu Zaid says. 'This is an essentially theological issue.' For expressing views like this in print – in essence, for challenging the idea that the Koran must be read literally as the absolute and unchanging Word of God – Abu Zaid was in 1995 officially branded an apostate, a ruling that in 1996 was upheld in Egypt's highest court. The court then proceeded, on the grounds of an Islamic law forbidding the marriage of an apostate to a Muslim, to order Abu Zaid to divorce his wife, Ibtihal Yunis (a ruling that the

> shocked and happily married Yunis described at the time as coming 'like a blow to the head with a brick') (Lester 2000: 225)

We do well, in other words, to be circumspect when reading our own Western post-higher criticism assumptions into the religious texts of other societies.

In a meditation on the concept of holy lands, in Russia, Japan and Serbia as well as in the Middle East, Hastings notes that '...the political consequence of a holy land can be devastatingly destructive of religious communion, historical culture and consciousness of a shared community'(Hastings 2003: 3). In the Hebrew tradition, land is inherited (לרשת); in the Islamic tradition, all lands conquered by Islam become waqf (وقف) and are taken on a strictly non-returnable basis. Behind all of this, of course, the threat of violence, or its realization are played out and legitimized. Collins tracks this trend in the Old and New Testaments as well as in the Quran, noting that 'certitude leads to violence'(Collins 2003: 3-21). But certitude is what is at the heart of the emergent religions – a sense of bringing clarification and order to chaos. From the perspective of an emergent religion, certitude may kill, but it also sells. Religion, at a pinch, may have more territoriality about it than the state itself.

The Role of Religion in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

When I woke up that morning, I wasn't feeling well, so I stayed in bed.
Palestinian suicide bombing candidate explaining failure of his mission.[5]

While religion is not, initially at any rate, the touchstone of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the conflict cannot be discussed in purely socio-political terms alone. The June War of 1967 is generally acknowledged as that point at which Arab nationalism, and Palestinian nationalism in particular, began to make way for the

[5] ***Detail of interrogation of failed Palestinian suicide bomber, as told to author, by Israeli journalist Amnon Lord, autumn 2004.***

introduction of the Islamist stream in Palestinian resistance. Keppel points up the importance of the Iranian revolution and the situation in Afghanistan on 'proving' the yeast of Islamic nationalism in the Israeli-Palestinian situation (Kepel 2002: 150-158). Twenty years later, as the first Intifada unfolded, the chrysalis seeded by the perceived failure of Palestinian nationalism, emerged fully developed. Hamas fits into the category of what Springborg, in a submission to the Foreign Affairs Committee at the House of Commons terms 'national liberationists' as opposed to 'trans-national jihadis' (such as al-Qa'ida) and 'national Islamists' (such as Islamic Jihad in Egypt) (Springborg 2006).

Juergensmeyer, tying belief to pragmatic reaction through interviews with actors in the field of 'religious violence', comes to the general conclusion that such struggles are seen on a cosmic plane and have much to do with dignity and identity (Juergensmeyer 2003). As Munson notes, 'Religions can serve as a marker of identity even in the absence of belief'(Munson 2005: 223-246). It can be argued, of course, that Islamic antipathy to Judaism, from both a doctrinal and a sectarian point of view, well predates the Israeli-Palestinian nexus, the cohabitation in Spain in the Middle Ages and Goitein's Mediterranean mélange of Muslim, Jewish and Christian communities as reflected in the documents from the Cairo Geniza (Goitein, 1967-1988). The rejection by the Jewish community of the Hijaz, of the Islamic call to faith, as detailed in the Quran itself, adds historic depth to the debacle over land in modern Israel/Palestine. It adds, as it were, insult (religious) to injury (dispossession).

Israel's disappearance is a Quranically grounded historical necessity
Hamas slogan (Flores 2006: 164)

What might – very loosely these days – be called the Palestinian resistance movement is now divided into two fronts: the secular and the Islamist. This poses the greater question of the relationship between Islam and nationalism. Zubaida sees the globalisation of Islam as heralding the emergence of a general Islamic nationalism, bearing in mind the resistance of modern Islamic movements to the constrictions of territorial nationalism (Zubaida 2004). Tracking the emergence, in recent times, of Arab nationalism and Islamic reform through, among others, Zaghloul and Afghani, Abduh and Rida, he finds for both parallels and contradictions. Zubaida's conclusion seems solid enough 'Islam as nationalism then does not pertain to territory or state, but is often raised in the context of particular countries and their politics'(Zubaida 2004: 409). Islamism, therefore, in the Palestinian context, while still grounded in the same territorial issues as 'standard issue' Palestinian nationalism, is both opportunist in its local appropriation of what is essentially a nationalist struggle and its elevation of the local issue to the greater plane of Dar al-Islam V Dar al-Harb. In this regard, we might almost speak of a three-state solution: Israel, Islamic Gaza and nationalist West Bank. Nusse's conclusion is very apposite then, in this regard.

> On a short term basis, the great flexibility and the pragmatism that characterises the ideology of Hamas represents a considerable strength. They allow the evolution and adaptation of Islamic thought to specific historical circumstances. The Islamists' discourse of social justice responds to the despair of the Palestinians about the disastrous economic situation and the lack of economic development in the occupied Territories...the daily humiliation felt by most Palestinians, and especially by those workers who daily cross the green line into Israel, creates the coil on which the Islamists' defamation and demonisation of the Jews can flourish (Nusse 1998: 115).

Religion, therefore, is less the much-vaunted 'root cause' of the conflict but is, in a certain way, the forcing house of nationalism.

Grosby's contention that 'Religion is a relation of individuals to one another whose object of reference is an otherworldly being or power(s) and/or an existence beyond this world that, in turn, provides meaning to one's existence in this world' is apposite with respect to Judaism, Islam and Christianity(Grosby 2005: 108). Drawing from Biblical sources, he notes how primitive Middle Eastern religion defines deity in terms of territory and demands fidelity. Nevertheless, tracking the development of Zionism in the 19th century, it is the de-Judaicising elements which stand out most. While religious inheritance is clearly tied to land inheritance, Zionism has more in common with nationalist movements, and settler-colonial ones, than it does with religious movements. Ben-Israel, on the other hand, finds difficulty in reconciling Zionism with European nationalism, asking 'Is the Zionist claim based on common territory, language, and descent, like the movements of the Czechs or Hungarians, for example? Answers vary' (Ben-Israel 2003: 91). In truth, Zionism is a composite of many nationalisms: ethnic, religious, territorial, cultural/linguistic and reactive. The reactive species, considered in the light of European anti-Semitism, is coupled with an overlay of top-down Gellnerian *Mitteleuropäische* nationalism. The paradox is, that as Palestinian nationalism becomes more Islamic, Israeli nationalism becomes less Jewish. This ties in with Fox's general conclusion, in a study of the rise of religious nationalism in the period 1945-2001, that 'religion can be an important influence on conflict. In fact, its importance has increased during the period covered by this study' (Fox 2004: 715-731).

Religion and the Northern Ireland Conflict

> But as the deluge subsides and the waters fall short, we see the dreary steeples of Fermanagh and Tyrone emerging once more. The integrity of their quarrel is one of the few institutions that has been unaltered in the cataclysm which has swept the world.
>
> *Winston Churchill on the Northern Irish conflict.*

Ignatieff's contention that 'There are two wars in Northern Ireland: a war between the Catholic and Protestant working classes of Belfast and Londonderry; and the war between the IRA and the Protestant farmers and townsfolk of the regions next to the border' points up a factor very often ignored in the Northern Ireland conflict: class (Ignatieff 1994: 173). While the conflict in the border regions could be looked on as a nationalist re-patriation of the land, the fact is that most of the combatants/internees/prisoners during the Northern Ireland troubles were either working class Protestant or working class Catholic. Although sectarianism was not absent from the southern state, the type of intense intra-class sectarian conflict highlighted by Ignatieff was not a dominant feature of the 1916 Rising or of the War of Independence, though some differ with this point of view (Hart 2003).

While it is possible to find, even as late as the early nineties, elements on the Protestant/Unionist side of the conflict which underline the 'holy land' concept of land inheritance in Northern Ireland, it is increasingly seen as an anachronism. The reason is relatively simple: there is no 'book' in the Northern Irish conflict tying territory to faith. Churchill's 'dreary spires of Fermanagh' have no such scriptural support. Southern's analysis of militant Protestantism in Northern Ireland, while pointing up the claim of scriptural authority, cannot really compete with the *Sitz- im-Leben* of the Hebrew bible and the Quran (Southern 2005). As we move up the social

scale, in Northern Ireland, religious differences, as with many societies, become less important. While Muslims and Jews may point to doctrinal differences which go back to the eighth century A.D, the average working-class Catholic or Protestant paramilitary would be hard-pressed to articulate differences with their counterparts which are based on religion alone.

The truth is that, in the Northern Irish situation, religion tends to point up the inherited past of, very roughly speaking, planter and peasant. The fact that the majority working class community on both sides were busy killing one another – and others – over thirty years, had far less to do with religious belief and far more to do with real and perceived inequalities set in nationalist aspic. In Northern Ireland, as opposed to the south, ideology followed action. In the south of Ireland, as earlier noted, the ideologues of the Easter Rising did their reading before incarceration. This, in itself, points up the cross-class basis of the insurrection in the South of Ireland. Although sectarian incidents took place in the War of Independence, intra-class urban sectarian warfare, the backdrop to the recent troubles in Northern Ireland, did not exist in Dublin, Galway or Cork as it did in Belfast.

Religion and the Novel

The novel is an art that belongs to a society in which faith is crumbling (Sitti 2006: 119).

Novelists, like actors, resent being given 'notes' by outside commentators. The novel form doesn't take kindly to impositions of religious restraints. While we can name Chesterton and Waugh and Greene as 'Catholic' novelists we mean it in a general sense. However, as Sitti remarks, 'The steady legitimation of the novel thus

accompanied the affirmation of democracy and the transition from the need for the sacred text to the relativity of the rules of civil existence' (Sitti 2006: 120). The sort of emergent secular pessimism evident in Matthew Arnold's Dover Beach, marks a certain breaking away from the certainties of scripture. The terrible truth is, there is no going back once scripture has been subverted. Once language became suspect – itself a function of the great German-driven 19th century philological tradition of higher criticism – the novel wasn't far behind. The rise of the 'social' novel, with Mrs Gaskill and Dickens, reflects the secularisation of social concerns in England and the demise of faith in 'the good book', as the final arbiter of justice and compassion.

In modern times, of course, the novelist has become ever more reluctant to be the message-bearer of religious tidings. This may have more to do with the nature of the novel than with the vicissitudes of societal constraints. Novelists, by their nature, revel in the new. Societally speaking, they will tend to come from that cleavage least resigned to orthodoxy. If not part of their brief, it is often part of their *tendenz* to critique society around them. And religion, from the novelist's point of view, happens to be on the radar just as much as any other feature of human life.

The fact that, by and large, the novelist is less likely to be 'religiously inclined' than many sections of society leaves us with a problem: the writer who will deal with the religious element of conflict is, perforce, writing from the outside. In Northern Ireland, violence with religious undertones, however vague, emanates, by and large, from working-class sources on both sides of the sectarian divide. In the Israeli-Palestinian situation, on the other hand, even among secularists, religion has a more central role. We cannot conceive of David Grossman as a purely secular Israeli, Emile Habibi as a Palestinian without his Christian background, or Ghassan

Kanafani as a Palestinian who does not come from a middle-class Muslim background. Religion, at one remove, is more integral to the lives of those in the Middle Eastern conflict. We do not expect, as in the Northern Irish case, religious affiliations to be sloughed off as people rise through the classes. This has implications for the novels chosen under the rubric of religion.

Dying for Ireland, Killing for Ulster: Eoin McNamee's Resurrection Man

> There was this very liberal British university student who got stopped by a gang in Belfast. They asked him was he green (Catholic) or orange (Protestant). He replied that, in fact, he was an atheist. So they beat him to death for not believing in God.
>
> *1970's Belfast joke*

The narrative of Eoin McNamee's *Resurrection Man* (McNamee 1994) is pegged on the real-time story of the murderous sectarian campaign of the group that became to be known as The Shankill Butchers. Dr Conor Cruise O'Brien, not known for his republican sympathies, in his introduction to the source book on which much of McNamee's novel is based, *The Shankill Butchers: A Case Study of Mass Murder* (Dillon 1990), draws a distinction between the murder and mayhem of the Provisional IRA and that of the Shankill Butchers.

> I don't find the theological explanation convincing, but I remain puzzled both by the phenomenon of the Butchers, and the absence of an exact parallel among the Catholic murderers. Lack of centralized authority on the Protestant side and the relatively tight hierarchical structure of the Irish Republican Army may partly account for the difference. The rest of the difference may be accounted for by the fact the IRA is more interested in its 'public image' than the Protestant paramilitaries have been in theirs (Dillon 1990: xiii-xiv).

In *Resurrection Man*, McNamee attempts to contextualise the group of killers known under the rubric of The Shankill Butchers and, as part of that exercise, to weigh up the role of religion in the process.

Eoin McNamee's central character, Victor Kelly, is clearly based on one of the ringleaders of the Shankill Butchers, Lennie Murphy. McNamee invests Victor with a series of fatal flaws, some local, some not a little Freudian. Victor's name – and names matter in Northern Ireland – is suspiciously 'Fenian' or 'Taig' (Catholic), for a working-class Protestant. It leads him, towards the end of the novel, to kill one of his co-religionists who makes too much of the black joke. Victor's relationship with his presumptive father is not what it might be either. There is a certain sense of psychosexual uncertainty about the shifting sands of Victor's psyche. From his mother's (Dorcas') point of view, Victor can do no wrong. From his father's point of view, he scarcely exists at all. McNamee sets the opportunistic psychopath in his social, political and psychological setting from the word go. And then, there is religion, the curdled cream on the cake.

> There was a network of small congregations and merciless theologies throughout the city. Congregations of the wrathful. Baptist. Free Presbyterian, Lutheran, Wesleyan, Church of Latter-Day Saints. Seventh Day Adventists. Quakerism. Covenanters. Salvationsits. Buchmanites. Pentecostalists. Tin gospel hall on the edges of the shipyard were booked by visiting preachers for months in advance. Bible texts were carefully painted on gable walls...Victor listened to their talk of Catholics. The whore of Rome. There were barbarous rites, martyrs racked in pain. The Pope's cell were plastered with the gore of delicate Protestant women. Catholics were plotters, heretics, casual betrayers.
> When he went home he would find his father washing in the kitchen and Dorcas watching television. This is Your Life. Dorcas would ask where he'd been.
> 'Down at the Cornmarket.'
> 'Them preachers. In America, they have them preachers on the television.' His father walked in, drying his neck.

> 'You'd better mind yourself, Victor. End up saved, so you will,' he said. (McNamee 1994: 9)[6]

It might still be the 19th century Ulster of Roaring Hanna and Cooke, the fire-and-brimstone Protestant revivalist preachers who set towns and cities alight in a reaction against Catholic Emancipation and the Repeal of the 1800 Act of Union. These sort of sectarian certainties weren't confined to Northern Irish Protestants, of course, but were well established in the South of Ireland also, from the 1920's on. The difference was, that in Northern Ireland, the roughest interface in the Protestant-Catholic divide was at working-class level. The same religious divide, in Southern Ireland, did not have the same class connotations. Tanner points up the dichotomy between Northern Irish Protestants and those in the South of Ireland, while admitting that change is coming about, albeit slowly, in the North.

> In the village of Lucan, outside Dublin, the local Presbyterian community has expanded sevenfold in recent years, bringing an entirely new type of person into the church. These are not Protestants in the former sense of the word, and certainly not Unionists. They are the orphans of secularism – mostly non-practising Catholics – who have little knowledge of, or interest in, the battles Presbyterians fought long ago. They are not Ulster Scots, know nothing of 1642 or the Covenant of 1912 and are wholly Irish in their culture, politics and allegiances (Tanner 2001: 428).

'Taigs' and 'Fenians' are, naturally enough, the favoured epithets of Victor's circle for Catholics. It is bred in the bone, at an early age, that they are objects of contempt. Victor likes to watch them in court cases.

> He liked to see a Taig brought into the box, a man's thin figure wearing a cheap leather jacket and a V-neck jumper. He hated the Taig women beside him. Their anxious looks which he despised. Their air of somebody sitting on a cardboard suitcase on a deserted

---

[6] ***'Saved' refers to the fundamentalist Protestant notion of being predestined for heaven.***

> railway platform, in flight from one half-starved city to another (McNamee 1994: 11).

Victor ends up in the company of like-minded hard chaws who want to take revenge on the I.R.A.'s United Ireland campaign of maiming, killing and destruction. The U.V.F. unit which Victor ends up attached to, as with many such units, has a Loyalist drinking den, the Honey Pot, as its centre-of-gravity. Here, weighty matters of who to kill and when to kill and, just as importantly, the representation of their successes on the television in the bar, are played out. But it is at another type of location, the 'romper room', that the real business of torturing and killing and other nefarious deeds will take place (the romper room was sardonically named after a children's t.v. programme).

> Billy McClure was the first to use the Romper Room. He was familiar with forms of initiation. He had convictions for paedophilia and knew that complicity was everything. It was a question of maintaining a ceremonial pace with pauses and intervals for reflection. Twenty or thirty was good, particularly if they were close – knit. That way you could involve whole communities. You implicated wives and children, unborn generations. The reluctant were pressed forward and congratulated afterwards.
>
> 'Good man, Billy.'
>
> 'I seen teeth coming out. I definitely seen teeth. There's them on the floor over there.'
>
> 'You can come around our place give the wife one of them digs any time, Billy.'
>
> There were long pauses for drinking. Men crowded round the bar eager to buy round for the whole company. The victim was ignored. He lay on the ground between the poker machine and the pool table. Victor would wander over with a drink in his hand, stir McGinn with his boot and stare blankly at him as if he were a specimen of extinction (McNamee 1994: 29).

It is this dehumanising of the Other that is so peculiar to the sectarian killing milieu of Northern Ireland. Phrases like 'them ones', 'the other side of the road', 'Fenian scum' and 'Orange bastards' help, at an early age, to dehumanise the enemy and turn him into a mere cipher to be eradicated. It is the sort of language, at a more

sophisticated level, employed by the likes of Hamas and Islamic Jihad, when the term 'Jew' is used as a collective, dehumanising tag, alternating with such lower level epithets as 'sons of pigs and monkeys'.

McNamee follows the Shankill Butchers narrative quite closely. We catch glimpses of inter-tribal fighting, of the 'gearing up' for the fight (guns and knives) and of Lennie Murphy's real-time killing of another Loyalist prisoner, when on remand in Crumlin Road prison, with cyanide. McNamee doesn't have to make any of this up. But neither is his narrative a mere bio of a Northern Ireland 'nutting (assassination) squad.' The fact that he invests his characters with enough depth to make them real to us and enough malice to make them evil and disturbed enough to carry through their plans, is a tribute to his story-telling powers. For Kennedy-Andrews, McNamee succeeds in throwing light on the charm of the chase itself.

> The unswerving, Hemingwayesque attention to objective detailing is accomplished with journalistic precision and vividness, without any explicit authorial attempt to guide or influence the reader. At the same time, the language, grounded in simple Realism, gestures towards mysticism. Killing has both an aesthetic and religious potential...this is the 'need' of the man with no inner self who requires others to confirm his existence. Uniting the erotic, the sacred and the diabolic (Kennedy-Andrews 2003: 129).

The culture of Loyalist and Republican bars, drinking clubs and shebeens, from the seventies onwards, is worth a thesis or two in itself. The Loyalist bars were, typically, festooned with Union Jacks, prisoners' mementoes and Red Hand of Ulster symbols. The Republican bars, a mirror-image of their Loyalist counterparts, were decked out with tricolours, images of the armalite (the Provsional IRA's photogenic weapon *par excellence* of the 1970's) and prisoners' memorabilia. The Honey Pot bar is the 'home' of Victor's 'team'. When he is, temporarily put in jail, he has to learn new skills such as ingratiating himself with Protestant warders.

> Victor was on the landing outside his cell talking to one of the screws. A red – faced man from Ballysillan or somewhere, Victor thought, one of those windy and resentful new estates with street kerbing painted red, white and blue and loyalist slogans on gable ends. He talked to Victor in a confidential way, like they were best of friends.
>
> 'See me, I'm a man with the ear to the ground. I know what's going on. Fucking Catholics. Equal fucking housing, equal votes. Fuckers looking for Protestants out of their jobs, out of their houses. Breeding like rabbits and living off the dole, off people like me pays their taxes. They don't want to work. Their women carrying their bombs for them. Their women coming in her, objects concealed in the vagina.'
>
> 'Then there's the IRA in here. Walk around like they own the place with big talk about political status and all. A man like me knows a sell-out when he sees it.' (McNamee 1994: 98)

Victor worms his way into the confidence of his captors and manages to 'stiff' another Loyalist prisoner who is about to turn Queen's evidence, having him first write a confession before forcing him to take cyanide. Here too, McNamee follows the real-life narrative of the 'Shankill Butcher' Lenny Murphy, down to the fact that Victor still manages to direct the campaign from his prison cell. It is all, so to speak, for the cause. The fact that, underneath all of this manic activity, a seriously distorted sense of mission and of election thrums away, is disturbing in the extreme. There are none so misguided, it seems, as the divinely guided. Southern, reflecting on the impact of theology on political resistance among Protestants in Northern Ireland, points up the case of Dr. Ian Paisley, in particular, and the recourse to both New and Old Testament wrath.

> Just as Knox's hermeneutical approach to the likes of Romans 13 was indispensable to the development of radical theories of Protestant resistance among his sixteenth – century brethren, so the same elementary ideas have played and essential role within Democratic Unionism in shaping a worldly ideology which is grounded in a militaristic theology. And here we can learn a lesson and gain an insight. The lesson, in true fundamentalist style, is that religious ideas and historical examples from even hundreds of years ago can be applied to the present. The insight is that the

> Bible's power to animate the lives of its readers is heavily dependent on the interpretation being made (Southern 2005: 77).

Southern notes that, after the signing of the Anglo-Irish Agreement between the British and Southern Irish governments, in the 1980's, that Paisley prayed against the then British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, 'to hand this woman Margaret Thatcher over to the Devil that she might learn not to blaspheme…O God, in wrath, take vengeance upon this wicked, treacherous lying woman' (Southern 2005: 71). Anyone who thinks, at a safe liberal distance, that this sort of Vaudevillian carry-on has no effect on hearts and minds, should think again. It is this sort of poison, trickled down to the sectarian hard drives of the likes of the Shankill Butchers and McNamee's Victor Kelly, which helped to fuel the fires of hatred, among the lower echelons of society. This is not Empire Loyalism in large capitals but a queer, life-hating sectarianism that uses three thousand-year-old Biblical narratives for legitimacy. It is as ridiculous, at one remove, as Republicans using ancient Fenian narratives to prove particularism. It is when McNamee focuses down to give us a glimpse of an actual sectarian snatch, torture and assassination, that we realise there is nothing abstract about sectarian hatred.

> At first he didn't see the yellow Escort emerge from a side –street, its motor idling. He had travelled another hundred yards before he became aware of the car following him at walking pace, keeping its distance in a way that seemed obedient, as if it were awaiting a command that he might make…when the car drew level with him, he knew that he had lost. A man spoke to him from the passenger window.
>
> 'What's your hurry, big lad?'
>
> Curran stopped and bent over double, gasping for breath.
>
> The car door opened and three men got out. One of them was holding a tyre iron.
>
> 'You're coming with us, son.'
>
> 'A big trip in the motor car.'
>
> 'Fuck's sake, mister you're not fit at all. Wee run like that and you can't get a breath.'

> 'He'll be fit by the time we get done with him, Victor.'
> 'Fit for fuck – all.'
> Curran held up one hand. He wanted permission to catch his breath before speaking, a respite so that he could begin to form words again. Please. (McNamee 1994: 118-119)

The pathetic plea for mercy will fall on deaf ears. Swift murder would seem almost merciful in this situation. But death will be the death of a thousand-and-one-cuts.

McNamee makes a point in *Resurrection Man* which he reiterates, later on, in *The Ultras* (McNamee 2004) – that of possible security force / Loyalist paramilitary collusion. What may once have seemed as nothing but naked Republican propaganda now, with the passage of time, begins to look more and more likely. The ancient cockpit of Northern Irish sectarian differences, Mid-Ulster, Tyrone, Fermanagh and Armagh, is thought to harbour memories of dirty deeds in a dirty war which, more than likely, involved the British Army using Loyalist gangs for their own ends. The added sense of possible 'blind eye' behaviour on the part of the Southern government adds further spice to the mixture. *Cui Bono* is the question here and McNamee comes down on the side of a certain amount of conspiracy.

> To Ryan at that moment the reporting of local hockey matches played in a fading light seemed like a worthwhile and hard-won task with the virtues of endeavour, well-tended pitches and the hallucinatory glimmer of white shorts against a darkening sky. But Coppinger went on to say that the identities of the men had been known to the police for a long time but that he had underestimated the degree of craft they brought to the killings. The carefully chosen routes, the stolen cars that were burned afterwards to destroy evidence, the removal of lead particles from clothing...Detectives hinted at threads of sympathy for the killers in the lower ranks. There seemed to be a dark current of approval in the political sphere (McNamee 1994: 116).

A commonality of interests may, or may not, have existed, between those in 'the political sphere' and those in the 'lower ranks.' Such sentiment is hard to prove. Nevertheless, it is more than likely that, over the next ten years, fresh evidence of security force collusion, if not in the case of the Shankill Butchers themselves, but in

other cases, will emerge. Truth has a habit of re-surfacing, as in Glenn Patterson's *That Which Was* (Patterson 2005).

But even Victor Kelly's luck must run out, some time. When he 'takes out' 'Flaps', a fellow paramilitary, in front of other gang members and then goes on to shoot another man in the stomach for intimating that he might be a 'Taig' we know that Victor Kelly's carefully-calibrated killing sensibility has ratcheted up dramatically. While the denouement will come, as it did with Lenny Murphy, in a hail of bullets – more than likely I.R.A. bullets – the most chilling scene of all will be played out when Victor volunteers to shave his father, who has recently suffered a stroke. Here, Freud and the twisted certainties of sectarianism go hand-in-hand. Victor's father who, after all, like Lenny Murphy's father (both bearers of Catholic surnames), may or may not have been a Catholic, lies open to the tender mercies of his sociopathic son. For a moment, McNamee has us believe that Victor may, indeed, do the unthinkable: 'take out' his quisling, crypto-Catholic father.

> Victor lifted the shaving bowl and approached his father with it. He started to soap his jowls and upper lip, covering them lavishly with the soap as if this were a thing he wished to efface utterly, banish to some starless littoral the mildly wattled flesh. Above the lather, the dark eyes stared back at him devoid of the precedents of fatherhood...with the heel of his left hand under James's chin, Victor shaved the top lip then threw the razor down on the table. He released his father's jaw so that it fell forward on his chest. James lifted his eyes slowly to meet his son's gaze then flinched and turned away.
>
> 'That's you done, da,' Victor said softly.
>
> 'That's a great job, son,' Dorcas said. 'I always cut the face off him. Take's a man.' (McNamee 1994: 226-227)

When the end does come for Victor, we note the shadowy figure of McClure, the security force setter-up, in the background. The gunmen slip out of a van and 'take out' Victor as he reaches for his weapon. But he is too slow. The coup-de-grace is delivered with a snub-nose revolver. Victor Kelly is past his sell-by-date.

In a penetrating essay that links place and sectarianism in McNamee's *Resurrection Man* and Mary Costello's *Titanic Town*, Stainer suggests that

> ...beneath McNamee's formal, detached cynicism, fatalism and postmodern shock-tactics, lies a useful critical examination of the nature of sectarian hatred and mistrust and a society divided by cultural-ethnic categorizations. The novel hints obliquely at possible explanations and motivations for the killings, accumulated knowledges, experiences and imaginings which offer a particular insight into essentialism (Stainer 2006: 108).

Resurrection Man ends on a sombre, hortatory note. Geography is still history and geography, like history, is bread in the bone. In a coda clearly nodding at Gabriel's lyrical soliloquy at the closing of Joyce's short story, *The Dead*, McNamee's narrative signs off on a sombre note.

> Bodies laid out as if for journey. That they would carry news of the city and its environs. The Pound. Sailortown. The Bone. That their news would be awaited. That they would test their quality against the dark and take their place among the lonely and vigilant dead (McNamee 1994: 223).

Of Israelites, Jews and Israelis: Chaim Sabatto's Adjusting Sights

A popular Israeli poster from the seventies and eighties shows an orthodox Israeli soldier praying, with tefillin and blue-and-white shawl, against a self-propelled canon. The message is clear: God and the defence of the state go hand-in-hand. It may be worth pointing out here, that the representation of the 'orthodox voice', in Israeli literature, is relatively limited, though less so in recent years. Chaim Sabatto is an exception to this rule and one whose work has reached a far wider audience than might first be expected. *Adjusting Sights* (2003), his second novel, was, in the main, responsible for this. It represents, as with the tefillin-and-prayer shawl soldier in the poster, the overlap between the religious element of the Israeli-Arab conflict (as opposed to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict) and the nationalist

element. The fact that the narrative revolves around the Yom Kippur War is central to this.

The Syrian came down like a wolf on the fold…

The closest the Jewish State has ever come to annihilation, post-1948, was during the opening days of the Yom Kippur War. The largest artillery barrage in modern history opened the war on the Sinai front. As Egyptian paratroopers swarmed across the canal to attack the Bar Lev line with German high-pressure sand-blasting pumps, the Egyptian airforce, taken out in a Blitzkrieg at the opening of the June war of 1967, flew north under a sophisticated SAM missile umbrella. But, if the situation was critical for the Israelis on the Suez front, it was even more so in the north. The parallel Syrian attack saw the Mt. Hermon 'eyes and ears of the state' being taken by Syrian paratroopers and a force of some 5,000 Syrian tanks cross the basalt wilderness of ancient Bashan and the Golan Heights. While many commentators hold that the Syrian battle plan was to retake the Golan – lost in the 1967 war – to the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee, most Israelis, then and now, see it quite differently. They see the Yom Kippur War as nothing, more or less, than a war for the annihilation of the Jewish State and its inhabitants.

The Syrian army massacre of some 20,000-30, 000 Syrian citizens, some nine years after the Yom Kippur War, in response to an Alawite uprising in the northern Syrian city of Hama, added to the sense that 'if that is what the Arabs do to the Arabs, what will they do to the Jews?' The Jordanian massacres and expulsion of Palestinians (Black September), over ten years earlier, was seen in much the same way. The Israelis, with the Agranat Commission of Enquiry after the Yom Kippur war, realised that the *mechdal* (Hebrew: 'screw-up'), was largely inspired by a mixture of post-967 hubris on their part, arrogance and wishful thinking on the part

of military intelligence. In the aftermath of the high days of the *al-Aksa* Intifada and the Israeli-Lebanese war of Summer 2006, a similar ruefulness has set in among the Israeli population, betokened by the likes of commentators such as Dan Schueftan, advocate of the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and senior lecturer in political science at the University of Haifa and lecturer at the IDF's National Defence College.

> But basically my attitude was, and still is, that Israel without the Gaza Strip is stronger than Israel with the Gaza Strip. Israel without Nablus is stronger than Israel with Nablus. Even more than that, Israel without the parts of east Jerusalem heavily populated with Arabs – with a very different delineation of the line than we had before 1967 – is stronger than Israel that includes 300,000 Arabs. My assumption is that, for the foreseeable future, we'll have neither peace nor any kind of working settlement with the Palestinians. My assumption is that the conflict will go on for at least this generation (Blum, 2007: 20).

The withdrawal from Gaza, in 2006, reflected far less a wish to hand the area back to the Palestinians as a fervent desire to be done with the Palestinians and 'let them fight it out between them.' A collection of Israeli war correspondents' reports, published just after the Yom Kippur war, compares the situation obtaining on the eve of the war to that on the eve of Operation Barbarossa, in June 1941 (Ben-Porat, 1973). The parallel isn't accidental: in the wake of Operation Barbarossa, the *Einsatzruppen* methodically worked their way eastwards, annihilating whole Jewish populations as they did so.

> The fate of the battle hung by a thread: if the Syrians succeeded, the road to Bnot Yaakov Bridge – and on to Rosh Pina, Safad, Kiryat Shmoneh and Upper Galilee – would be open before them. In the Syrian rear, the encircled positions remaining on the cease-fire line reported that the Syrians were pouring another armoured division through the Hushniye gap, and throwing all their available front-line forces into action, to achieve absolute victory...on Sunday, October 7, 1973, the shadow of holocaust hung over the Jewish State (Ben-Porat 1973: 21).

In Chaim Sabatto's *Adjusting Sights*, we view the war in microcosm, filtered through the religious lens of an Israeli Jew of Syrian/Egyptian origin. By the end of the narrative, the locations emblazoned in the memories of the Israeli soldiers, Hushniyya, Nafakh, the Tap-Line and so forth, will appear as so many way-stations between here and eternity. The existential angst of the account is tempered only by the special pleading to a higher force, the El of the Israelites, the Elohim of the Israelis. It is the juncture where, in the telling of the battles of Yom Kippur, ancient Israelite, Jew and Israeli overlap in time and place. Tanach and Talmud are tied together in a commentary that integrates the past with the present.

Adjusting Sights opens and closes with that most ancient of Israelite referents -- the moon.

הלבנה עמדה בתהרתה. ענן קל לא העיב עליה. ממתנת היתה בענווה שיבואו ישראל ויקדשו אותה ככלה שממתנת לחתן שיבוא ויפרוש עליה הינומא

(Sabatto 1999: 5)

A pure moon shone overhead. Not a cloud hid it from sight. It was waiting to be blessed by the People of Israel, as shy as a bride who waits to be veiled by her bridegroom...(Sabatto 2003: 1).

Adjusting Sights is, in effect, a religious telling of the Yom Kippur War rather than a religious take bolted onto a conflict narrative. Sabatto's cultural *Heimat* is at the intersection of several map sections, among them Syria, Egypt and Israel. But the Ur-narrative springs from the same primordial source: a memory, conditioned or not, of Israelite origins. The primitive cosmogony referred to, as old as Sumer itself, draws in sun, moon, stars in and effort to find meaning on the land below. When we go back to the 'Gezer Calendar', one of the earliest examples of Hebrew lapidary writing in the area of ancient Palestine, it is no surprise to find that the seasons, as

told from the sky, are central to the inscription. And central to the link between sky and land, as with *Adjusting Sights*, is the moon.

ירחו אסף ירחו ז

Two months of harvest

רע ירחו לקש

Two months of planting

ירח עצד פשת

Two months of late planting

Under the moon of Yom Kippur, the existential struggle will be played out. The seasons, so to speak, come from the sky. In the midst of the chaos, the narrator's childhood friend, Dov, goes missing.

> No one in our battalion knew what had happened to Dov. His tank commander had been too badly wounded to talk. The rest of the crew had bailed out without seeing him. Miki, the brigade adjutant, also said he knew nothing, as did Kimmel, the battalion adjutant. I believed them. The confusion at Camp Yiftach in those first days of the war was unbelievable. Hysterical civilians wandered about, asking for sons and husbands. Tankers in stained, filthy suits sat holding their helmets beneath the eucalyptus trees, each in a world of his own. They had all lost their tanks and come down to Yiftach, and now they sat in eerie silence, red – eyed and caked with soot, waiting to take the tanks that came out of the repair shop back to war (Sabatto 2003: 20).

The war and its effect on the fighters is reflected in the dizzying intertextuality of the narrative. There is no escaping the trauma of the war. Memory filters in through memory. There is the terrible sense of the lottery of death and the oft-asked question:

'Why was my son killed and not you?'[7]

No-one knows the whereabouts of Dov. Perhaps he has been incinerated in a tank or captured or left wandering about the Heights. The Syrian forces are headed in the

[7] ***Question asked of surviving Israeli soldier, Avner Dishon, after the Yom Kippur War, by mother of a soldier friend who died.***

direction of the ancient Israelite settlements of Dan and Ein Gev and Hazor and the newer Israeli towns and cities of Tiberias and Safad and Rosh Pina. There is a terrible sense, in the opening chapters, of a society close to annihilation. It is a tone reminiscent of the oft-cited lines from Lachish Letter no. 4, a plaintiff cry for help assumed, rightly or wrongly, by many commentators to represent a last stand in the face of the Babylonian assault, in 587 B.C., of Nebuchadnezzar. The words, written in Hebrew on a pot-shard, are those of a low level functionary tasked with keeping watch. The Babylonian incursion was the precursor to exile. Both Tel Lachish and Tel Azekah are along the same south-north line of sight.

> וידע כי אל משאת לכש נחש
>
> נו שמרם ככל האתת אשר נתן
>
> אדני כי לא נראה את עזקה
>
> And let him also know that
> we are watching for the
> beacons of Lachish
> (interpreting them)
> In accordance with all the
> code-signals that my lord
> has given
> but we do not see Azekah
>
> (Gibson 1971: 41)

It is on the second day of fighting, when the reality of the Syrian campaign, literally, strikes home, that the terrible sense of imminent annihilation is at its most intense. The grim detail of the encounter with the Syrian forces is recounted by the narrator and his companions, to a post-war Israeli army trio of military historian, psychologist and an intelligence debriefer.

> Syrian shells were coming closer. Two tanks were hit on our right.
> Eli thought a Syrian tank was on our flank and firing from there.
> Gidi couldn't spot it and ordered us to maintain covering fire

> straight ahead. But the sun was blinding me again and we had been in one place too long. We should have done it already. Gidi wouldn't give the order, though. We were the only tank in the covering force still firing and we had to stay where we were. 'Gunner, fire!' he called over the intercom. 'Fire!' He no longer had a range or shell. Elis had been told to load whatever he could grab first. 'Hollow charge in the breach', he shouted, slamming it home. Squash nose in the barrel.' I took aim as best I could through the observation slat. We were at such close range that the target filled the whole periscope...I fired and yelled 'You pray too, Gidi.' 'I don't know how to', he called back.
> I prayed as hard as I could. I beseech Thee, O Lord, save us (Sabatto 2003: 74).

Psalms, rabbinical commentaries, Talmudic quotations are interspersed throughout the narrative. As the threat of sudden death builds up, greater becomes the recourse to religious tracts, to soothe the existential angst.

> The Syrians had taken Nafah. We had to think clearly, logically. I felt the pocket of my shirt. There was a small book of Psalms there. It was my mother's. she had given it to me when I left for the war. It had her tear stains on it. She always read it on Sabbath afternoons. A psalm to David. The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lied down in green pastures' He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. It was the psalm my father sang before the Kiddush over the wine after coming home from the synagogue on Sabbath mornings. His melody was soothing. I had always associated it with the tranquility of the world on Sabbath mornings. But now another verse struck me. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall not fear, for Thou art with me. It was as though David had written it just for me. What was it that made you feel that all his Psalms were about you, like a portrait whose eyes stayed focused on you from every angle? (Sabatto 2003: 80).

It is this religious currency, Jewish or Muslim sensibility which is beyond the ken of many outside commentators on the Israeli-Palestinian debacle. It is, in many ways too, something that is beyond the understanding of many secular Israelis themselves. When the odds seem overwhelming, the evil thought rears up in the head: suicide. But it is not the selfish impulse of the vainglorious in defeat but something more akin

to the impulse of the 'falling man', in the iconic 9/11 photos of victims falling from the Twin Towers. A realization that the odds are, perhaps, insurmountable.

> No one spoke. Eli sat off to one side, gripping his grenade. Suddenly he blurted:
>
> 'I don't know about you, but I'm not going to be taken prisoner. If they come, I have a grenade.'
>
> We had all heard stories about what the Syrians did to our prisoners-of-war.
>
> 'Elis.' Ronni said quietly, as if he were disputing a Talmudic passage with a study partner. 'How can you say that? You know it's forbidden. The Bible says: He who sheds any man's blood shall have his blood shed. The rabbis say 'any man's' means your own too.'
>
> The two of them turned to me.
>
> 'Of course it's forbidden,' I said.
>
> (Sabatto 2003: 83).

When the Israelis approach the Quarry, the Saggers (wire-guided missiles) start up again. It is as much a matter of luck as of training, if one of the wire-guided missiles doesn't slice into a tank. As it turns out, it is close to the turning-point in the war on the Golan Heights. Soon the Israelis, with the help of Skyhawks taking out the SAM missiles sites and napalm attacks on the Syrian infantry, will be, quite literally, on the road to Damascus. Israeli self-propelled guns will begin shelling the suburbs of Damascus, on the heels of Israel airstrikes on Ministry of Defence buildings. On the Sinai front, contravening orders, Sharon will cross to the western side of the Suez Canal and the Egyptian 3rd army will be encircled and held as hostage while the two superpowers negotiate the climbdown. The result will be, more or less, a draw, with replays expected in southern Lebanon, the West Bank and elsewhere.

One of the narrator's companions, giving evidence to the post-war triumvirate, remembers the big push against the Syrians, at the start of the Jewish feast of Sukkot, the Festival of Tabernacles.

> 'On the morning of the fifth day, the first day of the feast, there was time to pray and bless the Four Species. I had brought an etrog, a citron, from home. I always buy one in advance to keep the commandment to start preparing for the Feast of Tabernacles right after Yom Kippur. The smallest commandment makes such a difference. The Sages said: a man should always consider both himself and the entire world half-sinful and half-just, so that even a single commandment can tilt the balance. And the citron, the only one of the Four Species to both smell and taste good, stands for the man who has both knowledge and good deeds' (Sabatto 2003: 121).

After the war, life settles down to an uneasy routine, on the Golan. But there is none of the subdued hubris of the post-1967 period. None of the sense that, should the Gog and Magog of the Arab forces rise up again, that it will be simply a matter of 'smiting the Philistines, hip and thigh', as one Israeli defence minister suavely put it. The mood, instead, is one of sombre quiet and preparedness.

> Such were the Sabbaths of our tank battalion in the winter of 1973-1974, on the northern Golan Heights between Khan Arnaba and Tel Antar. We derived much comfort from them. They helped us to forget our sorrows and they gave us a sense of purpose and hope. Sometimes we were scrambled in the middle of prayer or eating by a sudden artillery bombardment or a firing order. It didn't faze us. In no time we were in our tanks, loading our guns and preparing to shoot. We did our jobs and returned to our meals and prayers as though we had never left them (Sabatto 2003: 136).

The year marches on. Rosh ha-Shannah arrives. As ever, time on earth relates to the moon as much as the sun. The lunar prerogative prevails. During the second Sabbath of the month of Kislev, 'the soldier who never spoke' lets it drop that he was in the Dov's tank and was the only survivor.

> 'Our tank was the last in Nafah quarry to be hit, right after yours. We saw you running when we bailed out. We ran after you. You stopped for a minute by a culvert under the Tapline road and ran some more. We came to it and crawled inside. A few minutes later some Syrians came along and tossed a grenade into it.'
> He said: 'I was the only one who wasn't killed. I was left alone.'
> Enveloped in silence, he slipped away in the dark. I stood dumbfounded.
> I looked at the moon and saw Dov. We had sanctified the moon of Tishrei together, the two of us, in Bayit ve-Gan with the Rabbi of

> Amshinov…I looked back at the moon. A small cloud had drifted across it. Although it still shone, its light was no longer as bright (Sabatto 2003: 143).

What starts with the moon of the Israelites, ends with the moon of the Israelis. There is a continuity and a cohesion here, between land, language and cult that is not easily told.

Jabal Nebu: Mythology wrapped in Allegory

אנך משע בן כמשית מלך מאב הד	I am Mesha, son of Chemosh-Yat, king of Moab, the
בני אבי מלך על מאב שלשת שת	Dibonite. My father was king over Moab for 30 Years

From the Mesha Stele Diban, Jordan, 9th C B.C. (Gibson 1971: 74-76)

The ancient kingdom of Moab lies east of the River Jordan, flanking the southern shores of the Dead Sea, between the River Arnon and the River Zered. A scrubland that just about supports goats and cattle, it figures in the biblical narratives on a number of occasions. The Mesha stele, found to the north of Moab, in modern day Dhiban (biblical Dibon), reveals an ancient context of occupation and the inter-connectedness of both banks of the River Jordan. In the foundation narrative of the Israelites, Moab is connected to the Hebrews years of wandering, before crossing into Canaan, the land of milk and honey. Mt. Nevo, Jabal Nebu, the biblical narrative tells us, is the point from which Moses espied the Land. But it was left to Joshua Bin Nun and his associates to actually ford the River Jordan and occupy the land. Mt. Nevo, therefore, is both the site of the envisioning of the future state and, ultimately, of return frustrated. And so it is too, with Izzat Ghazzawi's last novel, *Jabal Nebu* (1995). Aisha Bint Abdullah Muti leaves Moab, her husband and son, and strikes

northwards for Mt. Nevo.[8] From there, she can see across the Jordan, to the fertile lands of the modern day West Bank. But, like Moses, Aisha will not live to see the Promised Land. Her body will remain on the Eastern side of the Jordan, peremptorily buried on the hill top.

Jabal Nabu takes the expulsion and return narrative of the Palestinian *ethnie* and abstracts it into allegory. The story opens by setting the local in the context, temporal and spatial, of the ancient Near East.

> This place look so majestic, as though it were the final destination where one disappears. I discovered that the phrase was actually 'Enuma Elish', in the Assyrian tongue, that is to say, 'The story of creation' or 'When on High', written in cuneiform. I took my pen, knelt down, with this astonishing find in my grasp, engraved on a red rock with oil – I had expected that – I took out a piece of paper from my pocked and copied out the letters. Three times I coped them out, fearful that I would forged a letter or a sign. I finished, folded up the piece of paper and concealed it. Then moved off, cautiously, between the rocks (Ghazzawi 1995: 9).

Jabal Nebu, at a simpler level, is the story of Haj Ibrahim, his wife Aisha Bint Abdullah Muti and their son, Youssef, who fled to the East bank of the Jordan after the 1967 June War. The yearning of the parents to return to al-Sadir, a synonym for Jerusalem, causes great tension between them. The dusty badlands of Moab, with its own distant view across the Dead Sea to the Judean Desert, and the refugee town of Busra, is the locus of the story. When an archaeological expedition comes to town, young Youssef has the chance to flee his faith. All is not, so to speak, as *maktub* (written, i.e., foreordained) as at first seems. Traumatic events shape the young Youssef's life. His mother vanishes, ostensibly on her way to al-Sadir, but is found dead on the mountaintop of Jabal Nebu and is laid to rest there. His father takes refuge in the charms of a village wise woman, Bint al-Mabruk, while he himself falls

[8] The late Izzat Ghazzawi, whose son was killed by Israeli army gunfire, in the nineteen eighties, was head of the Palestinian Writers Union, a leader of the first Intifada and a lecturer in comparative literature at Bir Zeit University. He was involved in discussions with Israeli writers and intellectuals over the years.

for her daughter, Miriam. A mythological wild man, Masoud el-Wali, also becomes Bint al-Mabruk's lover, bringing a minotaur-like presence to the dusty, arid village. Everything in Jabal Nebu, though grounded in the diurnal realities of Palestinian exile, functions at the mythic level as well. As with *Waiting for Godot*, when we are watching Beckett's Vladimir and Estragon act out the esoteric, we are, subliminally or otherwise, aware that allegory is only experience abstracted. It is, so to speak, all in the way it is told. At a remove from the reality, abstraction itself can, paradoxically, seem more real as it represents the individual distillation of collective memory.

Busra, the grubby refugee town, becomes the flawed mirror-image of al-Sadir, Jerusalem. But everything is frustrated: there will be no glorious return and the son Haj Ibrahim wants to father, Ishmael, by Bint al-Mabruk, will never be born.. Ishmael (Ishmael-May El hear: ישמעאל / اسمع ال), father of the Arabs and son of Hagar, cast out into the desert from the sown, is the emblematic Arab, a sometime sojourner. Youssef himself will eventually abandon 'the man' for the far shores of the United States, to pursue the abstraction of cuneiform and the dead civilisation of Assyria. He will fly by the nets of land and language and religion. But not quite. At the end of the day though, it is Aisha's sad story that compels most.

> From the top of our house, I also raised up my hands – the mountains of Moab talked silently with Busra but there was not enough light to see. Haj Ibrahim once said he'd climb up the mountains to have a look at Sadir…he said he'd leave before dawn so that when he arrived, it would be the first rays of the sun pouring light towards the west. I asked him if he would really see it; 'yes', he replied, but his eyes lost their light. How said I felt that I put him off. He walked out silently. I wished I could walk with him. I knew he'd carry his stick and go. I imagined him roaming the borders of Sadir with his eyes. Perhaps, he'd halt at his mother's old house, his father's tomb, the Green Shrine, and perhaps he'd see the houses of both Amena and Affaf and make sure they got children (Ghazzawi 1995: 33).

Aisha will be buried beside a Carob tree, that symbol of stability and plenty, atop Mt. Nevo. Like Moses, she will see the Promised Land but will never cross back across the Jordan. The elevation of al-Sadir follows, as does the narrative itself, which is threaded through with Islamic referents, the high status of Jerusalem accorded in Islamic tradition.

> Even at such moments, Sadir haunts us. Nothing could be its equal as if it were the center of the universe; the place that God created before any other place and sat there for a rest...and there too, we left Afaf and Amena and ages of absence. When I arrived at the camp, I said, 'You are blessed Bint Abul-Muti...I bought a house exactly like the one we had in Sadir.' In spite of months of silence, she smiled and looked carefully into my face. She said nothing, but when we ordered a lorry and packed, she willingly took off. She, Youssef and myself sat in the back and huddled together as the evening drew near...(Ghazzawi 1995: 53).

Ghazzawi nods towards Tayyib Salih's seminal novel, *Season of Migration to the North,* in the narrative and we see similar threads running through Jabal Nebu. Youssef, caught between East and West, parallels the situation of Mustafa Said, in the Sudanese novel. The wise woman – and paramour – in Jabal Nebu, Bint al-Mabruk, parallels Bint Majdhub, in Tayyib Salih's work. But it is the lyrical melancholy of the telling, the tone itself, that is most reminiscent of *Season of Migration to the North.* Just as Mustafa Said retains a diwan in his house that is choc-a-bloc with works of western culture, so too will Youssef, schooled in the orientalism of the West, find himself intellectually, if not emotionally, caught between two shores. Once one has left, one can never return. And yet, one must. In the Beckettian idiom: one must fail better the next time.

The memories of '67, like '48, are still stark though. Affaf, Youssef's sister, who stayed behind on the west side of the Jordan, after the Six Day War, recalls the aftermath.

> We ate grass. Some people continued their walk eastward; others stayed in the open and waited. We said 'not all people fled Haifa or Nazareth in '48...let's attempt to return; we'll either live or die.' We returned. Many devastated houses looked like piles of wreckage. Hell must have opened. An attractive cool welcomed us as my husband pushed the door open. Everything was in its place: the hay carpet, the tea kettle and the primus stove. We could hear the thrilled cries of Amena and her husband. Were we to stay or would the soldiers come and decide for us? (Ghazzawi 1995: 75).

For Youssef, however, there will be no return across the Jordan. He does not share his mother's faith. The pull of the world without will save him, if not redeem him. In the local world, in which he can no longer live, lies abstraction and contentment. It is the resigned sigh of the little man, worn out with empires, be they Assyrian, Ottoman, British or Israeli. Like the nameless narrator of *Season of Migration to the North* who, at the last moment, cries out for help from the merciless indifference of the fast-flowing Nile, Youssef will go on. There seems to be no alternative but to fail better the next time. It is not so much a counsel of despair as an earnest of reality abstracted.

Religion as a Chronotope of Culture

The essential working-class sectarian nature of the Northern Irish conflict is reflected in Eoin McNamee's *Resurrection Man.* What has often been dressed up as a row between two nationalisms, Loyalist and Republican, is very often little more than a continuation of a cross-class struggle, at the coalface. While the Plantation of Ulster and much of the rest of Ireland, and the subsequent transfer of disloyal subjects is a historical factor in the ongoing conflict, issues of class and religion cannot be ignored either. This is clearly displayed in McNamee's *Resurrection Man.* The drink and drug fuelled sectarian killings are psychopathic in nature and tinged, not a little, with a bizarre *Herenvolk* contempt which has trickled down to the lower

levels of Northern Irish Protestant society. The killing regime, in *Resurrection Man*, is also far more intimate than in the Israeli-Palestinian theatre, if we omit the more recent development of suicide bombings. The paradox is that most of the combatants in the Northern Irish conflict quite literally speak the same language – English – and come from the same class. It may even be that this proximity exacerbates the tensions between the two communities. At any rate, what is presented in *Resurrection Man* is no picture postcard of a long thought out political campaign but more a working out, at street and pub and romper room level, of ancient hatreds and animosities – a ground zero sort of reactive nationalism, with plenty of flags and emblems but with little in the way of coherent ideology, not to mention theology, among its proponents. It is, in essence, reactive, in the worst possible way. And religion, while not peripheral to McNamee's tale, is trumped by class.

Jabal Nebu, Izzat Ghazzawi's ethereal take on the realities of dispossession and *al-hunin ila al watan* (the longing for the homeland), cleverly lifts the Palestinian reality onto an abstract level while, at the same time, bolting it fast to the realities of land and living. Parodying, rather than paralleling, the Joshua narrative of crossing the Jordan and seizing 'the land', Ghazzawi's patriarchal figures are Palestinian, squatting east of the Jordan, looking north west, from ancient Moab, past Edom and Gilead, to the Promised Land. As with the famous comment about Beckett's Godot, 'nothing happens twice' in *Jabal Nebu*. There are two failed crossings back to the homeland. There is, within the lyrical, ethereal narrative of Jabal Nebu, the notion that the sense of place cemented by religion among the residents of Busra, is an ancient one. It is a sense not contingent on written narratives or, to be more precise, written versions of oral-formulaic narratives, but one embedded in the oral narratives of each generation. It is, indeed, more like the picture

of popular Islam presented in Tayyib Salih's majestic *Season of Migration to the North*, a thing of telling and re-telling.

The Yom Kippur War took place on one of the holiest days of the Jewish calendar – Yom Kippur – and of the Muslim calendar – Ramadan. Badr, as the operation was codenamed by the Egyptians and Syrians, after the Battle of Badr in Mecca, in which the Prophet finally gained the upper hand against his opponents, was almost the end of the Jewish State. While the biblical, Talmudic and rabbinical references in Haim Sabato's novel *Adjusting Sights* may seem to suggest a novel of overweening religious sentiment, it is far from that. The battle for survival detailed on the Golan Heights, in October 1973, is seen through a religious prism but, in essence, is the same old battle over land and the same old battle for survival. It is a battle stretching back to pre-Islamic times, to the Canaanite/Israelite/Philistine wars. The successive collapse of the Israelite/Jewish communities in the area, from the Babylonian exile through the expulsion from Jerusalem after the Roman Revolt (in A.D. 132) through the Muslim conquest and occupation of Palestine in the seventh century, bespeak a taking and re-taking of the land. Whatever the 'true' story behind the Joshua narrative, *Adjusting Sights* plays with remembered myth and memory to sharpen the existential threat posed when the Syrians breach the ridge at Kuneitra and come tumbling across the Golan Heights for the Sea of Galilee, the Huleh Valley and the Jordan Valley. Simply put, there is no equivalent in the narratives of the Northern Irish conflict to the picture presented in *Adjusting Sights*, either with respect to the scale of the conflict or its confessional content.

The Provisional I.R.A., although they might have had some hope of subverting the southern Irish state at certain phases of the 'Troubles', in particular after Bloody Sunday (1972) and during the H-Block hunger strikes of 1980-1981,

could never hope to destroy the British state. The best they could do, as with the Canary Wharf and Baltic Exchange bombings of the 1990's, was put a slight dent in British G.D.P. The Loyalist paramilitaries could never hope either, to destroy the southern Irish state. In the Middle East, however, the stakes are much higher. The greatest difference, in particular in light of the Hamas/Islamic Jihad/Hizbullah campaigns which followed long after the Yom Kippur War, is the religious element of those campaigns. This is, therefore, in the current phase of the Israeli-Palestinian discourse, a row about land, between two tribes and two religions and two *Weltanschauungen.* The Northern Irish dispute, in recent times, is between two subsets of Christian faith, mostly at working-class level, rowing over rights and responsibilities. In comparison to the current almost esoteric debate between Islam and Judaism, the Northern Ireland conflict looks almost innocent. This contrast is well represented by al Ghazzawi, Sabatto and McNamee. The pincer-movement of the current Hizbollah campaign in Southern Lebanon and the Hamas campaign in Gaza are current evidence, if such were needed, between the existentialist nature of the Middle Eastern conflict and the continuing, if contrasting, role of religion as represented in the novels.

Chapter 6

Language as Land

Language as Homeland and Hinterland

My uncle was thrown out of the I.R.A., in the thirties for insisting on speaking Irish…

John McGahern[9]

עברי דבר עברית

Hebrew, speak Hebrew!

اللغة العربية بحر

The Arabic language is a sea

The relationship between language and nationalism is a more complex one than nationalists might at first believe. Embedded in the 19th century philosophies of Herder and Fichte, the connection between polity, ethnie and language seems straightforward enough in the light of languages of power or emergent status, such as German or Hungarian (Judt & Lacorne 2004: 1-16). Although the tendency to view language in the nationalist framework alone will not suffice, the recent history of the Irish and Hebrew languages must take into account the commonweal of Irish and Israeli nationalism and the status afforded to various languages within Zionism (Hebrew, Yiddish, French, among others), on the one hand, and Irish Republicanism (Irish and English).[10] The relationship of Arabic to both Palestinian nationalism and Islam is quite unique in that Arabic is at the intersection of three worlds: it is the

[9] Personal communication with the author, in a Galway pub, 1990.

[10] The term 'Irish' will be used here to distinguish Irish Gaelic (Gaeilge) from Scots Gaelic.

lingua franca (in dialect form) of several states, a literary language, in its *fusha* form, and the supranational liturgical language of Islam, par excellence.

The revival of Hebrew was a realisation of the sort of objective Martín O'Cadhain, 'the Joyce of Gaelic', author, Republican, linguist and native speaker of Irish from Connemara, had in mind when he said

Is í athréimniú na teanga athghabháil na tíre.
The repossession of the language is the repossession of the country

The dialect of O'Cadhain, who was interned during the Second World War by the government of the Irish Free State, was rooted in Cois Fharraige, South Connemara, and reflected the entrenchment of Irish on the fringes, a process which started formally with the 'to hell or to Connaught' Cromwellian clearances of the early 17th century. The disempowerment of the language, an objective of governments from Elizabeth the 1st onwards, gained fresh impetus after the Flight of the Earls, in 1607, when the ruling autocratic Gaelic clans fled the country after the Battle of Kinsale, in 1603.

Socio-linguistically speaking, the revival of a dead language (i.e., one that is not a *mamaloschen*, or mother tongue, 'the first language of emotional and intellectual recourse'), is the linguistic equivalent of making water run backwards up a hill. In a talk I gave to members of the Republican movement, predominantly Provisional I.R.A., members, in 1991, in Portlaoise high security prison, I was surprised to find a certain begrudging admiration for Israeli achievements. This was at a time when the official Sinn Fein party line was firmly PLO in sympathy. It was less the facts of Israeli military prowess that were being admired as the revival of 'their language', a point lost on many Republican commentators on the Israeli-Palestinian nexus.

Irish nationalism is remarkably shy – some would say shamefaced – in the face of the failure of the Irish language revival, especially in the post-1922 Free State period, a fact noted as long ago as the sixties, by De Freine, in *The Great Silence* (De Freine 1967). Contemporary commentators such as Cleary (Cleary, 2002), while nationalist and post-colonial in tenor, provide an interesting comparative study of the Irish, Israeli and Palestinian novel, but are remarkably mute about one of the mainstays of the Irish nationalist movement: the revival of the Irish language. The index to Cleary's book contains not a single reference to one of the bulwarks and wellsprings of Irish nationalism: the attempted revival of the ancestral language. While obliquely praising the achievement of the revival of Hebrew – it was, after all, achieved before the foundation of the Israel state and is a clear case of language before statehood - Cleary adds the usual *de rigueur* demonisation of the Ashkenazi elites, the very ones, as it happened, during the first three Aliyot, who laid the ideological and societal bedrock for the revival. It is, of course, the very success of the Hebrew revival, in the eyes of nouveaux nationalist commentators which is really suspect. Misery, in the post-colonial world, loves company and nothing, it seems, fails quite like success.

> Despite its internal diversity, capacity for self-criticism and many distinguished achievements, modern Israeli Hebrew literature is nevertheless intrinsically tied to the hegemony of the European or Ashkenazi Jews. In the pre-state period, the first waves of settlers in Palestine were comprised almost exclusively of Ashkenazi Jews, and their descendants have dominated political and cultural life in Israel since its foundation. (Cleary, 2002: 83)

It is a tacit admission that, when all the nationalist rhetoric and post-colonial preening is done, that the one defining characteristic of the culture of the island of Ireland, now that re-unification is off the menu and Catholicism is on the wane, the

Irish/Gaelic language, is seen to be of minimal importance, even to nationalists themselves.

A local survey carried out in the area of Tullaroan, North Kilkenny, in 1819, by one George Mason - clearly a non-nationalist and a member of the Protestant ascendancy class - makes for interesting reading as regards the status of the Irish language in that region, in the pre-famine period. Mason's perspective is both pointed and pragmatic.

> Both the English and Irish languages are spoken in the parish – the latter is greatly on the decrease, and must continue to decrease rapidly both here, and in every part of the nation, from two principal causes: first the hedge schools, where English alone is taught, and secondly the necessity imposed upon the country people of speaking English in all their trafficking...through this the English language rapidly advances, for so anxious are the people to speak it in the country, that the mountain farmers who cannot speak English, and who send their children to hedge schools, will scarcely allow them to speak Irish at home. Irish will thus soon fall into disuse in the south, and probably also in most parts of Ireland, and it is desirable that it should be disused among a people who think themselves a sort of aboriginal race, and that the majority of landholders and intruders, which added to their natural jealousy and hatred of the English, keeps up a spirit of discontent and suspicion of oppression, that makes them ready instruments of insurrection in the hands of agitators, for those men instil into them the opinion that their connection with the English nation is the cause of all their sufferings, and the prejudices of their education induce a ready assent to this doctrine. Hence, every thing that tends to destroy the distinction between the two people, as to their language, manners, dresses or similar points, would assist greatly in removing these invidious feelings. (Mason 1819: 40)

Mason's text highlights many of the issues relevant to the decline of the Irish language on the island of Ireland: the purposeful undermining of the status of the language, the connection between market and language, the growing connection of the concept of national language to emergent nationalism and the auto-emancipation of the native population from their increasingly rural and disempowered tongue. This

is the mid-point in a long process, begun with the first Tudor plantations of Ireland in the 16th century, and culminating in the lopsided status of the Irish language today: geographically marginalised, politically impotent, except in the negative role of reactive nationalism (although it has recently been accorded 'paper tiger' status as the 19th official language of the European Union).

Love, Money, Laughter and the Decline of the Irish Language

As a sixties' child of returned immigrants, from London, being educated bilingually in a school run by the Christian Brothers, in Dublin, it dawned on me, if quite dimly at that stage, that three areas of life seemed to have no bearing on the strange, dispossessed, brittle language which formed a large part of my bilingual education: love, laughter and money. Nobody told jokes in Irish (not in my hearing anyway), the language seemed remote from the rougher realities of love and, despite certain sections of the population being paid for speaking it, no-one actually made money in the language as opposed to making money out of the language.

> The British, French, Italians and Irish were asked to write a book about the elephant. The British wrote The Elephant and the Collapse of the British Empire. The French wrote L'Elefant et le Haute Cuisine. The Italians wrote L'Elefant et L'Amore. And the Irish wrote An t-Eilefant agus Bás na Teanga (the elephant and the death of the Irish language).

The joke, at one level, tells of the obsessiveness of the gaeilgeoirí but speaks too of the same shamefacedness mentioned earlier. Nevertheless, in order to attempt an overview of the present, we need to briefly annex the narratives of the past.

The various Plantations of Ireland, from one of the earliest, Laois-Offaly in the late 16th century, to the later plantations in Ulster, are tied in with dispossession and eviction, the imposition of an alien state religion – Protestantism – and, one might say, the ritual disembowelment of the Irish language to the point where, in

George Mason's time, the Irish themselves convert *en masse* to the use of English because, in the words of the late Sean O'Tuama, a renowned scholar of Irish 'the Irish loved their children more than they loved Irish.' Filippula sets the turning point in the process as the early nineteenth century, i.e., pre-famine (Filippula 1999).

MacGiolla Chriost (MacGiolla Chriost 2005) gives a nuanced view of the decline of the language from several perspectives: nationalist, ethnic and ecolinguist being just a number of them. He notes that colonialism involved the extirpation of the power of the language and that this was no innocent enterprise – the dictum of the English poet and colonist Edmund Spenser that 'the words being Irish, the heart must needs be too' comes to mind. Mac Giolla Chriost views the Cromwellian plantation of 1649-1650 as crucial in the initial decline of the language as Irish speakers – particularly those involved in the rebellion of 1641 against English settlers – are driven west to the poorer lands. The bitterness in the disempowerment of the language is recorded in the Gaelic poet Daithi O'Bruadair's snarling 17th century riposte. O'Bruadair here is speaking as much about loosing his own social perch as about the decline in his own 'language of power', of course

Mairg atá gan béarla binn	Woe to him who cannot simper English
Ar dteacht na n-iarla go h-Éirinn	Since the Earl has come across to Ireland
Ar feadh mo shaol ar chlár Chuinn	So long my life upon Conn's plain continues
Dún ar bhéarla dobhéaruinn	I'd barter all my poetry for English

For Palmer three strategies were employed in the Elizabethan period to sideline Irish: unacknowledged translation, ventriloquism and the presentation of speech as spectacle (Palmer 2001: 212). Using the framework of the Spanish conquests of the Americas, she points out some of the similarities in both colonial situations.

The acceptance by the new Catholic ascendancy, some hundred and fifty years later, of English as the language of power, compounded the marginalisation of Irish as language of power, communication and, ultimately, hearth and home. The fact that the great 19th century leader of Irish Catholics, Daniel O'Connell, himself a native Irish speaker from Kerry, remarked that 'although the Irish language is connected with many recollections that twine around the hearts of Irishmen...I can witness without a sigh the gradual demise of the Irish', has provided much cause for comment (O'Cuiv 1969: 123). The fact that Maynooth College, a training institution for Catholic priests, founded in 1795, used English as the medium of instruction helped set the seal on the disconnect between native tongue and indigenous religion. The necessity for the mass of peasants in George Mason's 1819 Tullaroan to follow suit, was self-evident. One interesting paradox must be noted however: the rise in Irish nationalism in the early nineteenth century is almost contemporaneous with the arrival at the 'tipping-point' in the decline of the language.

Irish Nationalism and the Decline of the Irish Language

The rise in Irish nationalism in the 19th century presents us with the paradox of a Protestant antiquarian interest in the Irish language motivating Catholic interest in their own declining language and, ultimately, in land repossession and hegemony. The life of Dr. Douglas Hyde (1860-1949), a church of Ireland member, founder of the Gaelic League and, later on, second president of the Irish Free State, is the latter-day embodiment of this earlier Protestant antiquarian trend. The fact that Hyde's organization was infiltrated and eventually 'commandeered' by the physical force advocates of Sinn Fein and the Irish Republican Brotherhood, is a practical example of the conversion of Protestant antiquarian interest in the language into the territorial nationalism of the emergent Catholic lower middle-classes and an earnest of the

shallowness of Irish nationalist thinking with respect to 'the language' (Garvin 2005 98).

The ties between the language movement and the Irish Republican Brotherhood, the main force behind the 1916 Easter Rising are clear. Here again, if we look at the situation of a number of figures of the pre-1916 rising period, we can extrapolate both political and personal explanations. James Joyce's family, a downwardly mobile entity due, in the main, to *Joyce pere's* drinking career, lived at many addresses in Dublin. Among those was North Richmond Street, on Dublin's less fashionable northside, the setting for the story *Araby*. Joyce was educated first at the Jesuit Clongowes Wood, in Co. Kildare, setting for part of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (Joyce 1971) and, when circumstances became less favourable, at the Jesuit-run Belvedere College, in the centre of Dublin. Both colleges were favourites of the upper levels of the ascendant Irish Catholic middle classes. Eamonn Ceannt (born Kent), one of the leaders of the 1916 Rising, born in 1881, the year before Joyce, was the son of a rural R.I.C. man and, in late boyhood, went to school in the same North Richmond Street, on Dublin's northside. The life trajectories of both Joyce and Ceannt couldn't have been more different, however. Joyce's education, at the hands of the English-speaking Jesuits, was paralleled by Ceannt's education by the Irish revivalist Christian Brothers, in the school referred to in the short story *Araby*.

> North Richmond Street, being blind, was a quiet street except at the hour when the Christian Brothers' School set the boys free. An uninhabited house of two storeys stood at the blind end, detached from its neighbours in a square ground The other houses of the street, conscious of decent lives within them, gazed at one another with brown imperturbable faces. (Joyce 1965: 23)

For Joyce's father, however, the thought of sending young 'Jim' to school in such an institution was anathema, as revealed in the second chapter of *A Portrait of*

the Artist as a Young Man: 'Christian brothers be damned! Said Mr Daedalus. Is it with Paddy Stink and Mickey Mud? No, let him stick to the Jesuits in God's name since he began with them. They'll be of service to him in after years. Those are the fellows that can get you a position' (Joyce 1971: 71). This attitude spoke less of intra-Catholic political differences as of intra-Catholic class differences. The correlation between membership of the Gaelic League and leadership of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, in the run up to the 1916 Rising, is further highlighted by Hart (Hart 2003: 124). Others have pointed up the particular involvement of the Christian Brothers with Irish nationalism throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Coldrey 1988). The social status of the majority of the officers and volunteers of the 1916 Rising is noted by Hart (2003 124). He finds for a preponderance of lower middle class occupations and, most interestingly, 'drapers assistants'. It ties in with Yeats' image of nationalist leaders, recollected 'in tranquility', after the 1916 Rebellion.

> I have met them at close of day
> Coming with vivid faces
> From counter or desk
> Among grey, eighteenth century houses
> (Yeats, W. B. 'Easter 1916)

The revival of Irish was viewed almost as a retreat into some glorious past. For the Hebrew revivalists, on the other hand, the revival of the language involved making a profound connection between past, present and future - in the words of Harshav, 'a revolution'- as opposed to a simple nationalist reaction.

We spot a parody of Irish language revivalists in the figure of Joyce's Molly Ivors, who makes a cameo appearance in Joyce's story *The Dead.* When Miss Ivors invites Gabriel - a frustrated, middle-class schoolteacher and often seen as Joyce's avatar of what he might have been, had he stayed in Dublin - to visit the west of

Ireland, Gabriel rejects this as he wishes to visit France and Belgium to 'keep in touch with the languages'. Miss Ivors shoots off her reactive nationalist bolt at once.

> 'And haven't you your own language to keep in touch with – Irish?' asked Miss Ivors.
> 'Well,' said Gabriel, 'if it comes to that, you know, Irish is not my language.'
> (Joyce 1965: 161)

When Gabriel (Joyce) returns with Gretta (Nora Barnacle) to the Gresham, Nora lapses into her native Hiberno-English as she speaks of her long dead lover, Michael Furey: 'I was great with him, in that time.' (The phrase is a Hiberno-English calque from Irish). Joyce, ever the unsettling one, is acknowledging here his own unease about the no-man's land between Irish and English, but not from the simplistic nationalist view of Miss Ivors.

This contrasts with the hard-headed, 'thinking nationalism' of the Second Aliya and should give some pause for thought. Linguistic nationalism - a subset of cultural nationalism - is the least likely to be prey to reactive forces. For one thing, it is much easier to force people to stop speaking a language than to persuade them to start speaking another language. However, to make people speak a 'language of low utility' - such as Hebrew or Irish - the *mamaloschen* or first language of emotional and intellectual recourse, is a feat that has been only achieved once in recorded history: in the Palestine of the Yishuv/ British Mandate. Harshav's (Harshav 1993) use of the term 'revolution', when writing of the Hebrew revival, recalls the comment that the 1916 Rising presaged a 'rebellion without a revolution.' Safran points up the uniqueness of the Hebrew project.

> For purposes of mobilization, however, it is much more practical to adopt the language spoken by the common people that to introduce Latin or some other 'elite' language. This explains why nation-building is closely bound up with the emergence of vernacular languages. French, Italian and other 'vulgar' Romance languages won out over Latin; Aramaic, Yiddish and Ladino

> displaced Hebrew for many generations; and Hebrew won out in the Jewish community of pre – independence Palestine not because of the efforts of Zionist intellectuals but those of the workers, farmers, and schoolteachers who organized a strike in 1914. (Safran 2004:7)

Contrasting Language Revivals, Hebrew and Irish

It seems not to have occurred to the Irish revivalists, as it did to the Hebrew revivalists, that a living language must have the cultural, economic and social base that only the city can provide. This minimalist approach to the revival is also mirrored in one of Douglas Hyde's statements to the Cumann Gaelach (The Irish Society) in America, in 1891.

> I do not for a moment advocate making Irish the language of the country at large or of the National Parliament...what I want to see is Irish established as a living language for all time among the million or half – million who still speak it along the west coast, and to ensure that the language will hold a favourable place in teaching institutions and government examinations. (O'Laoire 1995: 225)

O'Laoire notes the various objectives of the revivalists, from bilingualism through language replacement (English with Irish) and the varying emphasis placed on home, or institution or literacy, among other areas (O'Laoire 1995). This contrasts greatly with the Hebrew monolingualism proposed by the likes of Ben Yehuda. It is also in contrast with Ben Yehuda's intention of re-establishing the Hebrew language as the first language of oral communication. This possibility, according to Rabin, presented itself to Ben Yehuda a number of years earlier, in the late 1870's, quite by accident. Ben Yehuda was to meet up with a certain Mr. Zundelmann, in Montmartre, to discuss the acceptance of an article of Ben Yehuda's in the Hebrew paper Hashachar.

> We sat and talked for about two hours about my plans for the future and the work I had been offered in Jerusalem, as well as all the political problems of those days. And this long, enthusiastic, and serious conversation was conducted entirely in Hebrew! This was the first time I spoke Hebrew for so long, on such serious matters, and not just in order to speak Hebrew but for the sake of the subject at issue. For minutes at a time I almost forgot that I was talking Hebrew. (Reinharz & Shapira 1996:759)

The essential difference between Ben Yehuda's 'plan' and Hyde's is clear from a comparison of their first major statements on their 'missions.' Ben Yehuda's 'A Weighty Question' (שאלה נכבדה) was published, in Hebrew, in Vienna in 1878, and called for the revival of the written language as a spoken language. Hyde's 'The Necessity for De-Anglicising Ireland' was published in 1892, in English, and is essentially reactive in its approach in that it lays more emphasis on combating English influence, politically, socially and linguistically, than on promoting a revival.

> Irish was appropriated by separatist discourse, and then by the national consciousness, not as a means of effecting a decolonised identity, but as not-English, a symbol among other symbols of national difference. Irish, as symbol, is placed alongside games, dances and music in an equation that ignores the privileged ontological status of language in relation to reality and identity asserted in psycho-linguistic theory and much recent philosophy. (Nic Craith 1999: 185)

The usefulness of the language as a battering-ram against English sensibilities diminished, as noted earlier, with the foundation of the Free State, in 1922, despite the official policy of revival of the language which lasted for many years.

O'Leary's magisterial two-volume work - *The Prose Literature of the Gaelic Revival, 1881-1921*(O'Leary, 1994) and *Gaelic Prose in the Irish Free State, 1922-1939*(O' Leary, 2004) – highlights the negative nationalism underpinning much of the Irish revivalists' raison d'etre. Irish was seen, among many of the revivalists, both religious and lay, as a sort of linguistic Maginot Line that would keep out foreign (i.e., British) and alien (i.e., non-Catholic) influences.

> And this defensive metaphor occurs, again and again in the jeremiads of many proponents of the revival. Thus in the Gaelic League propaganda pamphlet, Ireland's Defence-Her Language, Father Patrick F. Kavanagh argued 'There is no stronger rampart behind which nationality can entrench itself than a native language. Erect, then, the fence around your nationality which your foreign enemy has so long striven to destroy.' (O'Leary 1994: 20)

This was tied in with the elevation of the Irish-speaking peasantry, by urban-dwelling ideologues, as the *fons et origo* of Irish nationality.

Not all Irish revivalists were so naïve, however, and it is interesting to note that O'Leary nominates Padraig O'Conaire, Patrick Pearse and Peadar O'Laoghaire (a Catholic priest) as exemplars of more nuanced thinking, with respect to the literature of the revival. It is no surprise either, that Riggs and Vance cite the same trio as being at the forefront of creating an Irish prose literature that was far from provincial in aspect (Riggs and Vance 2005:248). Pearse's continental forays in Belgium, O'Conaire's sojourn in London – at roughly the same time as Chaim Yosef Brenner, the Hebrew writer – and O'Laoghaire's breadth of reading, meant that they invested their work with something beyond the utilitarian and pedestrian tropes of common-or-garden language revival literature. As with Ben Yehuda, they were writing not just for the sake of writing in Irish, per se, but because they had something of interest to say albeit in a language that, in the later words of the Connemara writer Martin O'Cadhain 'may be dead before I am.'

The reasons for the relative failure of the Irish language revival are set down by O'Laoire in his comparative study of the Hebrew and Irish revival movements, chief among them being the concentration of revivalists at the middle-class end of the spectrum (O'Laoire 1999). O'Laoire notes too, certain elements in the success of Hebrew: the need for a common language among the groups of Jewish immigrants to Palestine; the age-old use of Hebrew as a lingua franca among Jews; pre-schools,

immersion methods and connection between school and home the home. While we may debate some of these points - particularly the utilitarian one of the need for a common language (German, French, Russian and English were all plausible possibilities, after all) - much of what O'Leary says makes linguistic sense. Nahir, on the other hand, gives a practical account of the mechanics of language replacement and, ultimately revival, in the settlements in Palestine which points up the relative elitism, unrealistic methods and half-heartedness of the Irish 'revival' (Nahir 1988). Nahir also highlights what he terms the 'engine of national-religious unity' as being the driving force behind the revival.

What is missing in many accounts, however, is an emphasis on the particular nature of the Second Aliya and the Third Aliya, which brought an ideologically-motivated nationalist and socialist ethic to Zionist settlement in Palestine, in the wake of the ideological 'protoelites' of the first Aliya.

> The cultural phenomenon took place outside of academia. The most cardinal phenomenon in this context – the revival of the Hebrew language – had no connection whatsoever to academic bodies. Eliezer Ben – Yehuda's philological innovations, along with the practical work carried out by teachers in the First Aliya colonies, and the Second Aliya laborers' insistence on speaking Hebrew, brought about the dissemination of Hebrew as a spoken language. Scholars of modern Hebrew appeared after the language itself had come into existence, and they made only a marginal contribution to its dissemination (Kheimets & Epstein 2005:21).

We can see the practical connect between social and institutional realities if we contrast O'Laoire's statement on the Hebrew revival that 'Bhí na páisti sásta an teanga a thabhairt abhaile leo' (the children were content to bring the language home with them), with a rather pathetic extract from a political memoir published in 1946,

almost a generation after the foundation of the Irish Free State, by one Liam C. Skinner under the rubric 'Problems Outstanding'

> It may be said, with truth, that there is still a danger that Irish cannot be restored as the every – day language of the inhabitants of this island....the enticement of school children to speak the language outside the classroom is of obvious importance. An experiment might be tried whereby children encountered speaking Irish on the way to and from school would be given a little prize. This scheme might be extended to the playing – fields, cinemas and other places of entertainment. (Skinner 1946:316)

Skinner goes on to follow the official line that residents of the Gaeltachtai should be 'pampered in every possible way, with special services and so on.' (Skinner 1946: 317). In other words, that other Irish people should be paid to speak Irish, a sort of mouth-for-hire approach to language revival, distinctly absent in the Hebrew counterpart. Thus, the cultural nationalism of the 'protoelites' (O'Laoire 1999: 227), a development, in many ways of Protestant antiquarianism of the 18th and 19th centuries, was out of kilter with the mass nationalism of the majority of the population, which focused on land, religion, physical force resistance, identity and sovereignty. The Hebrew language revival movement into which Chaim Yosef Brenner was writing had no equivalent in O'Conaire's life. Few families were willing to sacrifice their children's future on the altar of a language which appeared to have no future and, most important of all, an urban future, with all that implied in terms of absence of social mobility and fiscal independence.

Mac Giolla Chriost's 'critical ecolinguistic' overview of the fortunes of the Irish language concludes with a nod towards the centrality of the city - and the absence thereof - in the Irish case (MacGiolla Chriost 2005). There is no Irish Tel Aviv, and not much likelihood that there will be any time soon. Thus, the realities that Mason noted, in 1819, as the factors in the decline of the Irish language in the

North Kilkenny area - institutions (the hedge schools) teaching through English, the encouragement of English in the home, for common sense economic reasons, and the critical importance of English in the market place (for which read society too) - were the very factors that allowed Hebrew to become the *mamaloschen* of a linguistic group now greater than that of Danish speakers: the nexus of love, money, power and family.

> Much of the appeal of Irish since 1893 has been romantic and it is the tragedy of the language that poverty and deprivation have generally made romance a luxury in the Gaeltacht struggle for survival and improvement which gave all the priority to the liberating powers of English. Romance thrives on comfort and leisure, so it is no surprise that the future of Irish now appears to lie in the hands of the linguistically long- anglicized urban bourgeoisie, especially in Dublin(Hindley 1990: 254).

This antipathy towards commerce, the needs of the family and the needs of society - a reflection of the indifference of most of the Catholic population of the island to the real 'threat' of an Irish revival, on the one hand, and the unreality of the elites of the Irish language movement, on the other - is mirrored by the presence of these very concerns in the pragmatic policies instituted by the much-maligned Ashkenazi intelligentsia of the early Aliyo*t* without whom it is unlikely that any Hebrew revival would have occurred. Irish, in the absence of an emergent society and a capital city had, quite literally, no home to go to. The revival of Hebrew, in effect, represents the outworking of the specifically Palestinian-Jewish collective genius underlying the resuscitation of a dead language as *mamaloschen*, the only case evidenced in recorded history.

Literature, Language and Life: Pádraig O'Conaire and Chaim Yosef Brenner

It is useful to compare the artistic, linguistic and political trajectories of two very disparate writers, the Hebrew writer Chaim Yosef Brenner (1881-1921) and the Irish (Gaelic) writer Padraig O'Conaire (1882-1929). Both writers are contemporaries of Joyce. Both writers share with Joyce, if at a less developed level, the same sensitivity to language, life and nation. Both writers are also writing for the city, an imagined community which was still coming into being, in the case of Tel Aviv, but which would be stillborn, in the case of the Irish Free State.[11] Garvin cites one hardheaded reaction to the new reality.

> Almost overnight the enthusiasm evaporated and the classes faded away. At first, we couldn't believe the classes were not going to continue...one of the most intellectual of the students said 'Well, the enthusiasm was great because we expected to have a Republic, and its dignity would demand the native language, but now we'll still be part of the British Empire, and have a divided country – not worth the effort of learning a language – English will be good enough for us.' (Garvin 2005:102)

It is important to consider the communities, real and imagined, which function as backdrops to both early 20th century writers. Pádraig O'Conaire's background was a mixture of the rural - the Gaeltacht of Cois Fharraige, outside Galway – and the urban, Blackrock College, a college for young 'Catholic gentlemen' and London. That is to say, while the rural language of his bilingual childhood was Irish, his urban language was English. In the pantheon of Irish nationalist ideology, such as it was, the peasant was considered the purest deity.

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[11] Attempts by Eamon de Valera, to 'settle' native Irish speakers in Dublin, particularly in the area of Santry, in North Dublin, took little cognisance of the social realities of urban life, such as social and physical mobility and market forces. Hamilton, H. (2003) The Speckled People. London: Fourth Estate., gives an interesting account of growing up in a Gaeilgeoir/German -speaking family in Dublin, in the fifties and sixties.

O'Conaire, whether he knew it or not, was writing in the face of a failing language revolution; Brenner, on the other hand, was throwing his linguistic and artistic lot in with Hebrew in the ascendant, although by the time he was murdered in the riots of 1921, this may not have been as evident as it was to be ten years later. By 1948, when the State of Israel was founded, Hebrew was a real-life *mamaloschen*, the language of a significant cohort of young children. It had become, what the Irish revivalists could only dream of, a 'droichead beo', that is to say, a 'living bridge' between past, present and future.

Early Twentieth Century Hebrew Novel-Haim Yosef Brenner: Breakdown and Bereavement

הוא הביט על עצמו כעל איב
He (i.e. Brenner) looked on himself as an enemy (Beilin 2006: 16)

Writers as disparate as S.Y. Agnon and the nationalist poet U.Z. Greenberg all 'diced' between the varying cultural and linguistic demands of Hebrew and Yiddish. Yiddish literature tended to be more connected with communalist, left wing tendencies and Hebrew literature more with individualist, Zionist tendencies (Chaver 2001: 47). The picture was a complex one.

> A revealing statistic in Zohar Shavit's recent survey on the development of Hebrew culture in Palestine substantiates Bachi's data, contradicting the official line that the Yishuv had relinquished Yiddish culture. According to Shavit, Hebrew and Yiddish newspapers were being read in roughly equal numbers in Tel Aviv; on a random day in June, 1927, 86 people read Hebrew newspapers in the Barzilay Library whereas 86 read Yiddish newspapers, published in Warsaw and New York. Thus, it appears that, at this time, the two cultures were, more or less equally active. (Chaver 2001: 40)

This was the situation obtaining some six years after Brenner's death. That is to say, even in the years after Brenner's demise, Hebrew as a revived language was not necessarily a foregone conclusion, despite the 'language war' of 1914. [12]

The *Sitz-im-Leben* of *Breakdown and Bereavement* (Brenner 1920: 2004) is Palestine in the second decade of the twentieth century and, more specifically, Jerusalem, the emergent metropole of Tel Aviv and the settlements in the Galilee. It is the world of the second and third aliyot, a world whose *Weltanschauung* is part East European Bundist (Jewish socialist) and part Jewish patrician. Hillel Halkin's introduction to his own translation of the novel makes no bones about the longeurs, digressions and overcrowded chapters that blight the novel. But he is also clear about the importance of the work as representative of a world that is coming into being – the world of the Jewish Yishuv and, ultimately, the State of Israel. Brenner's abandonment of his life as urban shtetl-dweller in East London is counterpointed by his sometimes sardonic embracing of a dry, disease-ridden, dusty Palestine.

> Written on the eve of the conflict (i.e., World War 1), Breakdown and Bereavement offers us a last, lingering glimpse of Palestinian life in the twilight days of the Ottoman Empire, when the horse – drawn carriage still vied with the railway and the country slumbered in peace if not prosperity, undisturbed by warring nationalisms and the forces of modernity, tough storm clouds were already on the horizon. There is a vintage quality to Brenner's sketches of Jewish life as it existed at the turn of the century in the orthodox quarters of Jerusalem or on the sand dunes north of Jaffa that had yet to be named Tel Aviv – sketches which have the posed yet intimate atmosphere of old daguerreotypes. (Halkin 2004 xv)

Brenner, an iconoclast to the last, is equally affected and unimpressed by the Jewish émigrés fetching up on Palestinian shores.

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[12] The 'language war' refers to the row over whether German or French should be the language of technical instruction. The victory of Hebrew, was another battle in the fight to give Hebrew 'somewhere to go', in terms of real social, economic and political power.

> Shneirson, Miriam's tutor, was a young Hebrew nationalist, certainly no worse than any of his Russian friends and contemporaries wh had debarked at one time or another off the coast of Palestine's Jaffa. They admired the splendid scenery from the deck of the ship, went into town feeling dreadfully moved, lost their temper at the Arabs who approached them on the way, ordered their meals at the hotel, told tales about the local farmer who weren't hiring Jewish workers, went out to work one morning with a hoe on their shoulder and a bottle of water and a half loaf of bread tucked under their arm, wandered around the settlements, made the pilgrimage to Jerusalem for one of the holidays, looked forward to seeing the Galilee, and then when they were through tramping about – ended with some trivial post as a secretary or teacher in Jaffa or Jerusalem. (Brenner 2004: 59)

Brenner's sardonic take on the new immigrants extends to a parody of the patchwork Hebrew used to replace the Yiddish 'zhargon' and all the other languages brought by the immigrants.

> What? They speak that jargon called Yiddish? The idea! That is, they made believe that as representatives of the two halves of the Jewish people in the Holy land they could communicate only in Hebrew:
>
> -Have a piece of chocolate, have.
>
> -Why 'cause it's good for me? I don't want none.
>
> -So when was you going to your aunt already?
>
> -I wasn't sleeping there. I was coming to here.
>
> -You should only don't forget, I'll pick you up a quarter to nine, wherever you go, me too.
>
> -You make me a little hurt and I give you a little kiss. (Brenner 2004: 208)

If the English the young Daedalus encounters in the Dean's study in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* is 'his before it is mine', and the Gaelic spoken and heard by Padraic O'Conaire in Dublin and London is really an uprooted Connemara *patois*, the Hebrew misspoken by Brenner's characters belongs to no-one - yet. It is a language being reterritorialized.

Brenner's Young Werther - one Yehezkel Hefetz - is as full of sorrows and angst as any of his neighbours. It isn't too hard to see him as a projection of

Brenner's own complex relationship with Judaism, Zionism, the Hebrew language and, ultimately, life itself. The inner turmoil mirrors the outer one.

> Ah, get a grip on yourself, Yehezkel, be strong! Learn to think of yourself as one of them, Yehezkel Hefetz! The weakness in the flesh – think of yourself as an old man and make your peace with it! Make your peace, old man Ezekiel! Life is generous enough without all that, even an old man's life is still a life. And if you can't if you don't know how to – then lie in your corner and stick out your tongue at yourself...oblivion is waiting for you, waiting. (Brenner 2004:121)

Harshav points up the sort of intellectual hinterland against which Brenner was operating. From this point of view, Brenner wasn't as much a voice calling out in a wilderness of formally-educated members of the 'liberal professions' as a writer engaged with the anarchic intellectual forces of the Second Aliya.

> Whether they completed their studies of not, there was an 'intelligentsia', in the Russian sense of the term, in the Second Aliya: that is, not necessarily members of the 'liberal professions' but those who read profusely and ask critical questions about everything and elevate every issue to an ideological level. This essential distinction - between the education, the level of consciousness, the ideological commitment, and the cosmopolitan horizons of the immigrants who came after the failure of the Russian revolution of 1905 and that of the immigrants of the 1880's - was similarly evident in Jewish New York and in the Yiddish literature created there. (Harshav 1993:139)

It is this absence of ideological scrupulousness which marks one of the greatest differences between the Irish revival / Nationalist project and that of the Hebrew revival / Zionist project. This is because the early Hebrew / Zionist project was not based on an antithetical stance, per se. It did not, as with the Irish case, depend on the presence of an enemy - the English occupier - for justification of its existence. But it is the sheer hard-headed practicality of the Hebrew/Zionist project

that sets it apart from the dreamier aspects of the Irish/Republican project. Harshav notes the insistence on a Hebrew-speaking city, rather than simply a Jewish Mediterranean city.

> The first Hebrew City, Tel Aviv, founded in 1909, arose out of the dissociation from the past and opposition to the world of the past, and a second opposition to the world of Jaffa. The framework imposed on life in the city was Hebrew from the start. The proudly pronounced adjective 'Hebrew' in expressions like 'Hebrew work', 'Hebrew land', Hebrew Federation of Labor', a 'New Hebrew Man', and the 'First Hebrew City' indicated an opposition to the discredited, Diaspora name, 'Jewish'. But this 'Hebrew' quality was also self – evidently connected with the Hebrew language. Thus, a Hebrew city had to speak Hebrew, as part of the same revival package. The council of Tel Aviv planted trees (return to nature and concern for beauty), forbade the selling of alcoholic beverages, organized guard duty, and imposed the Hebrew language...Hebrew was an embedded language within a frame of several other languages; but in Tel Aviv it became the official frame language of the city. The establishment of the first purely Jewish city in the world (after two thousand years) created a territorial base for Hebrew as the frame language of society, later duplicated in the kibbutzim. (Harshav 1993 143)

Irish, by contrast, had no organic urban reality but only an exilic presence in cities like Dublin, London and Galway. Its 'kibbutzim', so to speak, were the Gaeltachtai of Kerry, Cork, Galway, Waterford, Antrim and a few more isolated places. But there would be no 'Gaelic' city and, consequently, no power base for the language.

Padraig O'Conaire's Novel *Deoraíocht* (Exile): Language and Life in the Diaspora

O'Conaire's city is in sharp contrast to that which provides the linguistic and social hinterland of Brenner's city, emergent Tel Aviv and ancient Jerusalem. His simplicity of style, however, marked a deeper and more tragic engagement with the interface between language and land.

> O'Conaire's simple style made his stories immediately accessible to a wide readership but this ostensible simplicity masked a highly sensitive treatment of psychological issues. His one novel, Deoraíocht/Exile (1910), is purportedly set in London. However, this 'London' is not any identifiable geographical location but simply the obverse of a paradise lost which is the narrator's Galway. Resembling a nightmare scenario rather than a physical city, O'Conaire's London is synonymous with psychological alienation. Exile is a dominant theme of the author's work. The state or place from which the narrator of Deoraíocht is psychologically exiled, and to which he cannot return, is Irish – speaking Ireland. This extraordinary novel, with its surreal setting, and cast of grotesque characters, had been subjected to numerous interpretations but it seems more than plausible to read it as a metaphor for the trauma that followed the demise of the Irish language and the imposition, in its place, of English. (Riggs & Vance 2005: 248)

O'Conaire, we might say, is writing the sweeping saturnalia of his novel against a non-existent urban reality. The alienation of the Irish immigrant to London, socially, politically and linguistically, seeps through every sentence.

> Night is coming. I go out. The great city is in hiding under its marvellous cloak of fog. Now and then, you could see the lights of the coaches jumping up in front of you and disappearing with the speed of sparks. A person could be quite close to you and you would not see him until he bumped into you; and before you realised it, he would disappear from sight. But, although the city was hidden, you could hear its noises. Somebody shouting near you. The screech of a distant train. Fog – horns of ships on the river. Thousands of other muffled sounds coming towards you and fading away, all mixed together in one great humming. (O'Conaire 1999:23)

An almost autistic defamiliarisation is at play here. It is the sort of 'strange-making' carried to its ultimate in *The Third Policeman* (1967) of Flann O'Brien, a generation later. Prose writers like Roibeard O'Farracháin and poets like Mairtín O'Direain wrote against the urban backdrop of Dublin in later years, but the language of their literatures bore little relation to the language on the streets around them. Similarly

the dazed progress of O'Conaire's hero, Mairtin, progression through London and Galway is a tale of disconnection, socially, psychically and linguistically.

Albert Power's statue of Padraic O'Conaire, which once stood in Eyre Square (it is now in the civic museum), in the centre of Galway city, is a masterpiece of mediocrity. It presents an image of the writer that, in the damning Hiberno-English term, is 'harmless', i.e., pusillanimous and powerless. Before it was unveiled, in 1966, during the 1916 anniversary celebrations, a group of university students took the liberty of slipping a bottle of Guinness into statue's hand. The image was then complete, when the statue was unveiled: a harmless, dead Gaelic writer more interested in alcohol than art. Yet this is to deny the groundbreaking - and heartbreaking - features of O'Conaire's work in the short story and novel and ties in more with the general emasculating tendency of Free State literature in Gaelic noted by O'Leary (O'Leary 2004b : 19-90). O'Conaire's curse, as a writer, a greater curse than his admitted addiction to alcohol, was to be born into a rebellion (the 1916 Rising) without a revolution - language.

> B'iontach an radharc a bhí ag an easpag ansin, I bhfad uaidh sa talamh íseal chonaic sé toitean mór. Lasracha ag éirí agus ag deargadh na néalta. Bhi slua mór thart air, agus a rún fein agus a scéal féin ag gach duine acu...
> The bishop had a great view then, far from him, on the low ground, he could see a great conflagration. Flames rising up and reddening the clouds. There was a great crowd around him, each with his own secret and story...
> Anam an Easpaig (The Bishop's Soul) from Scothscéalta (O'Conaire 1956:82)

The collection *Scothscéalta* (O'Conaire 1956), a sample of O'Conaire's prodigious output of short stories, selected and edited by the Gaelic lexicographer De Bhaldraithe, shows the reach of O'Conaire's vision and shows how the novel *Deoraíocht/Exile* was no one-off outworking of a stray theme. The stories in

Scothscéalta include one about the biblical figure Salome, a story of a wronged woman in rural Connemara, another set in ancient China and the sardonic tale of a bishop and his driver set against the background of the 1916 Rising. All share the same barbed sensitivity and sense of social commentary. They are as much Maupassant as Chekhov while cleaving to the same duty to tell that informs Joyce's *Dubliners*. The difference is that they are rooted in a Gaelic-speaking consciousness that is fading, even as the writer pushes his narratives forward.

In the novel *Deoraíocht/Exile*, the drink-sodden progression of the days reflects something akin to a spiritual as well as physical exile. The characters are far removed from the socio-realistic creatures in Scothscéalta and have more in kin with the murkier imaginings of the magic realists. The Yellowman, the Lawyer, the Fat Lady, The Big Red-Haired Woman are all archetypes that add to the alienation of the central character. Mairtin, lamed by an accident, travels about in a fit-up freak show as a spectacle, a wild man of the west (of Ireland). The grotesquerie around him is marked by the same tortured relationship with reality. There is no happiness to be found here, only temporary relief from the vicissitudes of life. The novel ends with a bracketing footnote which explains that the whole narrative was found on the body of a dead man, in a park in London. This itself could be an image for the coming generation of Irish, both men and women, who were to clog up the parks of London as impoverished down-and-outs in the failed Ireland of the thirties, forties and fifties.

Parodies can only work if they are based on strong realities.
John McGahern

It is in the progression from the small-frame narratives contained in O'Conaire's *Scothscéalta* to the all-embracing novel format, in *Deoraíocht/Exile*,

however, that we see the limits of O'Conaire's language as it reflects the real-time hegemony of English in the Irish urban setting. O'Conaire's short stories can dip into the realms of oriental fantasy and political chicanery because, at the micro-level, they are reflecting a certain linguistic reality. At the novelistic level, however, he must retreat into allegory and absurdity because there is too much urban reality for the Irish language to bear in the telling. The city cannot be told, in any meaningful way, because the city does not exist in Irish, in the same way as it does in Hebrew. We cannot laugh at the joke if we do not have some purchase on the underlying realities. And if there is no 'real' story, so to speak, there can be no parody.

In short, the sort of linguistically and culturally embedded Hebrew novel, such as *Past Continuous* (Shabtai 1977), by the late Yaakov Shabtai, with its Tel Avivian lowlife ambience and urban vernacular, could neither exist in Irish in O'Conaire's time nor at present, because the reality adumbrated in the novel does not exist. The urban destiny of the twentieth century bourgeois novel had no future in Gaelic, as it had in Hebrew, because there would be no emergent urban entity to sustain it. The socio-linguistic Darwinism implied in Mason's 1819 survey of Tullaroan, Co. Kilkenny, held true in the twentieth century just as much as in the nineteenth. In this respect, the status of the Irish language, at present, bears more comparison with that of Welsh and Scots Gaelic than it does with the state language which is Hebrew.

Literature and Language in the Laboratory of Life: Aharon Megged

My mother was a fanatic of Hebrew...when she would meet people in the street she would say: 'Hebrew! Speak Hebrew!'

Aharon Megged[13]

The Israeli writer Aharon Megged (b. 1920) is the living embodiment of the confluence of language, literature and life. Emigrating, as a child, to Palestine in 1926, from Poland, into an emergent Hebrew polity, he was to become one of the founding fathers of Hebrew literature. His novel *Foiglman* (Megged 2003) explores the ongoing tensions between Yiddish and Hebrew. Educated in the *Tarbut* Hebrew-language schools of Poland (founded in 1922 as a network of Zionist Hebrew schools ranging from kindergarten to teacher training college), he came to Palestine ideologically and linguistically equipped for 'the revolution.'

Megged's *Foiglman* reflects, albeit some fifty years later, the Hebrew-Yiddish *Kulturkampf* which marked the accession of Hebrew both as *mamaloschen* and language-of-high-utility. The much-vaunted 'knowing the land' (Benvenisti 2000: 57) was replaced by 'knowing the language.' In the novel, Professor of Jewish History, Zvi Arbel, takes in a minor Yiddish poet, Shmuel Foiglman and, in doing so, wrecks his marriage and precipitates his wife's suicide. Whereas the Irish language revivalists had English as a nemesis, the Hebrew revivalists saw in Yiddish, even before the Shoah, the symbol of all that was flawed and weak in the Diaspora. The language war, in Palestine/Israel, was an intra-Jewish war, however. Arabic was not needed as an 'enemy' language, in the way English was for the Irish language

[13] Personal interview (recorded). Tel Aviv. October 2007.

> Then, suddenly, with no warning at all, after two or three days of silence between us, at ten or eleven at night, when I was sitting and grading papers in my study, Nora opened the door. From the threshold, she hurled at me, like a judge pronouncing a verdict, 'You were ready to destroy our lives for the sake of that Yid!' She slammed the door without waiting for a reply (Megged 2003: 234).

When Zvi Arbel is cuckolded, it is by a Sabra, a native born Israeli Jew, who has a practical, hands-on knowledge of *The Land*, as opposed to Arbel's academic attachment. It is as though the conflict within the writer Brenner, between the Hebrew writer and Yiddish writer, between the Diaspora Jew and the emergent Israeli Jew, had resurrected itself again. The poet Foiglman, soon to pass into the next world, rails against Hebrew shortly before his death as stands in Arbel's home, as Yiddish cuckoo in the Hebrew nest.

> Then he said, 'What can one do with this Hebrew of yours? Such a conceited, stuck-up language...Each word attired in a purple gown with a crown on its head...you can take a reverential bow before her, but not throw yourself on her neck...Sometimes I feel like grabbing a Hebrew word by its forelock, bending it a little and saying: 'A little humility, young lad, lower yourself to our height, to the size of simple folk...Don't walk about so haughtily, like a rich man's daughter parading in her Sabbath finery on Main Street...you know what they say in Yiddish: May God spare me gentile greed and Jewish arrogance.' (Megged 2003: 172-173)

There can, in other words, only be one *mamaloschen* and Hebrew, as the language of the Jewish *ethnie* of Israel, became the *mamaloschen*. The German-speaking Jewish homeland in Palestine imagined by Herzl in his utopian novel *Neualtland* (1902) became, in reality, a pre-state world founded on the *Neualtesprache* that was 'Palestinian' Hebrew. The Jewish immigrants to Palestine, particularly in the period of the Second Aliya and Third Aliya, therefore, were as much immigrating into a language as into a land. Language itself had become land for the would-be Hebrew

writer as much as the would-be Hebrew speaker. It would take another generation, however, before a state would be founded on the new linguistic facts-on-the-ground.

The Demilitarised Zone of Language: Sami Michael's *Doves in Trafalgar*

> Literature written in recent years does not devote much attention to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Quite often is serves as a backdrop, a given situation, a kind of working assumption, but there are few Israeli writers who tackle it head-on and try to enter its subterranean tunnels...Sami Michael's *Doves in Trafalgar* gets up close to the reality of the conflict and tries to row through its veins (Meltzer, 2005).

Both the setting and the narrative of Sami Michael's novel, *Doves in Trafalgar*, are relatively straightforward. The action takes place between Israel and the West Bank, for the most part; the tale is a variation on the Sicilian Brothers motif, of blood brothers separated at birth and meeting up later on. The real meat of the tale, however, hangs less on the day-to-day disruptions of the Israeli-Palestinian row and more on the emotional import of that vexed relationship.

Doves in Trafalgar is a story of separation, partial reunification and of the emotional matrix in between. It deals with issues of motherhood and motherland, mother tongue and fatherland. It shows how, in the case of the conflicted Israeli central character Zeev and his Palestinian birth-mother, Nabila, how *Blut* may take precedence over *Boden*. Zeev's two families, Reba, his Jewish Israeli mother, Schmiel, his 'third' father, his wife Anat and son Adiv, are in oblique emotional contention with his Palestinian shadow family: Nabilah, his half-brother Karim, half–sister Sana and his 'step-nephews', Suhail and Nuwwad.

The basic narrative of the novel is a calculated nod to Ghassan Kanafani's *Return to Haifa* (Kanafani, 1970) in that, like Kanafani's novella, it deals with a

child 'lost' during the 1948 Palestinian exodus, raised by a Jewish couple, partially reunited with his birth parents and the complexity of the rediscovery of the 'lost' child. By virtue of the fact that Sami Michael's Zeev cannot communicate with his birth parents in his 'birth' tongue, Arabic, but must rely, ultimately, on the linguistic demilitarized zone of English, *Doves in Trafalgar* subtly flags the socio-linguistic reality of living in a 'foreign' linguistic *'state'*. There can only be one birth mother, one mother tongue and one motherland. Even when Zeev's Palestinian mother Nabilah does improve her English enough to help communicate with her adult son, she is still aware of the deficiencies involved. 'I have been learning English and continue to learn it but it is still not the language of feelings for me' (Michael 2005 105). The heart, in Michael's novel, is the ultimate collocutor, at the end of the day. We are reminded of Stephen Daedalus' diary entry at the end of A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, where the roaring intellect of the *Bildungsroman* hero is chastened by considerations of things of the heart.

> April 26. Mother is putting my new secondhand clothes in order. She prays now, she says, that I may learn in my own life and away from home and friends what the heart is and what it feels. Amen. So be it. Welcome, O life! I go to encounter for the millionth time the reality of experience and to forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race. (Joyce 1971: 253)

The waypoints in Michael's novel's time-frame are coterminous with those of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict roaring all around the characters: 1948, 1956 (Suez), 1967, 1980's and 1990's (the Intifada). Michael, a writer well-situated on the left of Israeli society, doesn't scruple to show the effects of the occupation of the West Bank on the Palestinians who live there. In a particularly telling scene, a young Palestinian, Idham, watches his father's humiliation on television and is radicalised

by the experience. As in Belfast, in the early 1970's, so on the West Bank. This is reactive nationalism at ground zero, far removed either from inherited memories of the War of 1948, the more sectarian spoutings of Hamas or the lofty rhetoric of *a la carte* Arab nationalism. We are witness to the trauma experiences by Suhail, son of Zeev's Palestinian half-sister, Sana, after an Israeli army raid. The child, tellingly in view of the importance of language in the story, seems to lose the power of speech and to relapse into the status of an elective mute. In another scene, Zeev overhears a young Israeli woman, in the optometrist's office, refusing to attend a family meal in a restaurant for fear of suicide bombings. While depictions of heartless cruelty are not limited to one side alone, Michael, as an Jewish Israeli writer of Iraqi origin who wrote originally in Arabic, has a linguistic 'leg' into the sensory world of the other side.

The death of a language has a similar poignancy about it to the death of a child: both involve the loss of past, present and potential future. The linguistic, cultural and political Darwinism which decrees that one language lives and another dies was reversed in the case of Modern Hebrew; it came to pass, in the case of Irish Gaelic. When Badir (Zeev's original Palestinian name) is loosed from his cultural, religious and linguistic moorings as an infant, in the flight from Haifa, he is, quite literally, translated into another world. His language of first emotional and intellectual recourse becomes Hebrew. Therefore he is culturally, socially and psychologically, if not genetically, a Hebrew-feeling/thinking Israeli. His Palestinian father, Rashid, disowns him, when they meet many years later, choosing *Boden* over *Blut*, but his mother cannot do such a thing. Motherhood trumps motherland and even *mamaloschen* itself.

While Rashid, Badir/Zeev's Palestinian father cannot forgive the insult and hurt done to his people in the confiscation of their land and expulsion, Nabilah, Badir/Zeev's mother, is driven to reterritorialize her love for her lost child. In Rashid's eyes, his long lost son has, more or less, been replaced by that most awful of creatures: a changeling. There can be no meeting of minds here, let alone of hearts. The emotional heartland, however, lies firmly with that of his Israeli adoptive mother, Reba while, across the Green Line, his birth mother waits, hoping to re-engage.

In a further parallel with Kanafani, infertility pops up as a trope. In *Men in the Sun*, the Palestinian truck-driver Abu Khayzuran reminisces about his part in the fighting in 1948, concealing from the others the fact that he was emasculated during the battle. His personal fortune reflects the fate of his country. In *Doves in Trafalgar*, the Palestinian activist/petty criminal Taba Faroun is found to be suffering from fertility problems and so anxious to father a child, before his inevitable martyrdom, that he tries to blackmail Zeev/Badir's Palestinian gynaecologist sister into helping him or risk having it revealed that she has a Jewish blood relative in Israel.

The story, naturally enough, ends in what might be called a qualified disaster. After a less than heartfelt reconciliation between Zeev and his Palestinian 'half-family', Zeev is killed in a Palestinian attack, after an Israeli attack has killed Taba Faroun and an accomplice. The violent events, mere footnotes in the chronicle of Israeli-Palestinian conflict, betoken much more at the familial level. Nabilah has lost her son to his own people, having already lost her husband and son-in-law. And Anat, Zeev's Israeli wife, has lost her husband and the father of her child. Thus is the macro narrative of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict played out at the micro-level.

The Gaelic Rump Republic: Micheal O'Conghaile's Sna Fir.

Many socio-linguistic comparisons can be made between the rump regions of Gaelic-speaking Ireland and similar minority/majority language situations, not too far away. The situation of the Welsh-speaking community is the nearest to hand but the situations of Rhaeto-Romansch, in Switzerland, Sorbish, a West Slavic language spoken by some 50,000 people in Eastern Germany and, indeed, the case of Palestinian Arabic, in the Galilee all bear some similarities. All of these parallel minority languages exhibit varying ranges of linguistic and political hegemony, minority literatures, dialectal variations and what might be called 'half-lives.' The Gaeltacht of South Connemara, in the West of Ireland, represents the strongest Gaelic-speaking area in the Republic of Ireland, from a demographic point of view. It is also the location of the Gaelic language radio station, Radio na Gaeltachta, an offspring of the Gaeltacht civil rights movement of the late 1960's and early 1970's and the Gaelic language television station, TG4. The expansion of the Gaelscoileanna (Irish language immersion schools) movement has created a linguistic cleavage of younger bilingual speakers - for the most part urbanised - who are increasingly being looked upon, perhaps with some justification, as a harbinger of a better future for the Gaelic language on the island of Ireland.

Micheal O'Conghaile's novel *'Sna Fir*, is set between South Connemara, Dublin and London. O'Conghaile's worlds, however, differ greatly from that of his predecessor, Padraic O'Conaire, some hundred years earlier. The novel opens at a gruff ground zero in a local bar at the real-time interface between Connemara Gaelic and the outside, English-speaking world and details the contest between a drunken local singer and a U.K. soccer match on the bar screen.

> Fógraíonn Michael Jó Beag trasna an bheáir ar Johnny Rua a bhéal a choinneáil dúnta. Ní chloiseann Johnny Rua é, nó tugann an chluas bhodhar dó…
> 'Up Man. United. Come on Giggs.'
> 'Ara, Giggs. Ni fhagfar gig anocht aige, muis, fan go bheicfidh tú, fan ort.'
> 'Fuck Man. Utd. Níl iontu ach shower of wankers, anyways.' Bhi nimh ag fiuchadh sa nglór a labhair.
> Michael Joe Beag (lit. Michael of Little John) signals across the bar for Johnny Rua (lit. Red Johnny) to keep his mouth shut. Johnny Rua either doesn't hear him or ignores him.
> 'Up Man. United. Come on Giggs.'
> 'Ah, Giggs. Hi won't be left a gig himself tonight, wait 'till you see. Wait…'
> 'Fuck Man. United. They're only a shower of wankers, anyways.'
> There was bitterness in the voice that spoke. (Ó Conghaile 1999: 12)

The novel *Sna Fir* - the term literally means 'in the men' - is a tongue-in-cheek use of a local dialect term for adolescence, and is a homosexual *La Ronde*. Its lively, sarcastic and anarchic tone place it a long way from the more worthy 'improving' novels of both the Gaelic revival period and the Free State period. Although not reflecting a 'real' urban Gaelic language situation - i.e., an organic one - any more than O'Conaire's *Deoraíocht/Exile* did in the early twentieth century, it reflects urban and rural gay realities in a convincing way. While the greatest burden of the Gaelic language, after the imperial challenge of English, may be said to have been delusional Irish nationalist expectations, the particular burden of the Gaelic novel, as with the early Victorian novel, was the requirement to provide improving 'harmless' literature serving a nationalist cause, particularly in the post-independence Free State.

Sna Fir gleefully flies by those nets, disavowing the more earnest attitudes of the language revivalists. One could argue that, had *Sna Fir* been written by a Polish writer, in Polish, living in Dublin, that it would have represented a similar estrangement of language from surroundings but that is to beg the revisionist

question entirely: *Sna Fir* is written from a linguistic hinterland contingent to the cities of Galway and Dublin, if not London. Many of the English speakers in the first two cities are only three or four generations away from speaking and thinking in the same language as O'Conghaile. A certain tenuous parallel can be made, socio-linguistically speaking, with the situation obtaining in the Arab villages of the Western Galilee (Arabic speaking) and a city like Haifa (largely Hebrew speaking). Furthermore, the fortunes of Gaelic, such as they are, may be viewed, paradoxically, through two conflicting prisms-that of the revived urbanised Hebrew language, with its richness of language and literature and that of colloquial Palestinian Arabic with its rootedness in the villages of the Western Galilee.

Language is of central concern in *Sna Fir*, in the same way as it is in A.B. Yehoshua's *The Liberated Bride*, a Hebrew text laced with the localising, colloquialising Palestinian Arabic of the Galilee. That is to say, the medium of Connemara colloquial Gaelic, pockmarked with English imports, is part of the message in *Sna Fir*, coupled with the homosexual orientation of the book's narrator. Love, language, land and life go hand in hand in the narrative – ideology is treated just as disdainfully by the writer of *Sna Fir* as it is in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. Just as Yehoshua, in *The Liberated Bride*, makes a concrete case for the ethnic presence of Palestinian Arabs in the Western Galilee by creating facts on-the-ground with their very words, so too does O'Conghaile state the continued, marginalised presence of native Gaelic speakers, by the localised Irish lexis he uses in both narrative and dialogue. We are reminded of the young Daedalus and the dean of studies

> The language in which we are speaking is his before it is mine. How different are the words home, Christ, ale, master, on his lips

> and on mine! I cannot speak or write these words without unrest of spirit. His language, so familiar and so foreign, will always be for me an acquired speech. I have not made or accepted its words. My voice holds them at bay. My soul frets in the shadow of his language. (Joyce 1971:189)

O'Conghaile's hero, Eoin Pól - the name is a Gaelic version of John Paul - is located at the linguistic placental barrier between Connemara Gaelic, as minority language, 'fretting in the shadow' of English, the majority language. As with the Arabic of the Western Galilee, O'Conghaile's life and language are infused with the realities of the 'other world'. This is less about code-switching, strictly speaking, such as that between Arabic and Hebrew, as in the Druze villages of the Western Galilee, as it is about the wholesale infusion of English loan words and calques into the Gaelic *mamaloschen* Just as the Arabic speakers of the Western Galilee, particularly the younger ones, will know Hebrew better than most Jewish Israeli Hebrew speakers will know colloquial Arabic, so too will the native Gaelic speakers of Connemara understand the English on their own doorstep better than their Anglophone Irish neighbours will understand Gaelic. It is a practical demonstration of the asymmetric nature of majority/minority language interfaces. Eoin Pól's first meaningful homosexual encounter takes place with a Gaeilgeoir, an outsider, in the area to learn colloquial Gaelic.

> Ba é an Gaeilgeoir ard as Corcaigh an chéad duine a casadh ormsa, an chéad duine are leag mé lamh cheanúil air, an chéad duine a spréach amach asam an mothúchán láidir leochailleach a bhí ar lasadh istigh ionam...an samhradh sul má bhí mé sé bliana déag d'aois.
> It was the tall Gaeilgeoir from Cork who was the first person I met, the first person on whom I laid a fond hand, the first person who sparked in me the strong but fragile feeling that was burning inside me...the summer before I reached my sixteenth birthday. (Ó Conghaile 1999:39)

Later, when chatting with hid Aunt Kate, they both smile at the memory of Pope John Paul II's poor pronunciation of Gaelic - he confuses the genitive case of mac (son) with that of muc (pig) when he visits Galway, many years earlier.

> 'Tá an oiread Gaeilge anois aige agus a bheas, is dóigh,' a dúirt Kate, é soiléir go raibh sí ag baint spraoi as mo chuid aithriseoireachta.
> 'Má tá anois,' a deirimse, 'b'fhearr liom go mór dá gcoinneodh sé dó féin í. Nach 'a mhuic' a dúirt sé inGaillimh fadó agus ní 'a mhic.' Ta an ceart agam. Chonaic mé ar an seanfhiseán é a thaispeánan RTE ó thráth go chéile. 'In ainm an Athar, agus an mhuic...'
> 'He has as much Irish as he's ever going to have, I suppose,' said Aunt Kate. It was clear that she was enjoying my storytelling.
> 'If that's how it is now,' says I, 'I'd prefer if he kept it to himself. Wasn't it 'O pig', he said in Galway, a long time ago, instead of 'O son.' I'm right. I saw it on an old video that RTE shows, from time to time. 'In the name of the Father and the pig...' (Ó Conghaile 1999: 48)

Eoin Pól, even if he is a three-time outsider - a rural, Gaelic-speaking homosexual - doesn't seem that put out by it. Indifference, to both sexual orientation and the nationalist burden placed on the Irish language cuts both ways. What is clear, however, is that Ó Conghaile's novel is a literary reflection of the situation as is, in terms of the current fortunes of the Irish language. The Gaeilgeoir (Irish speaker)/ English speaker interface is now a more fluid thing. The only oddity on the horizon is the up-and-coming generation of Gaeilscoileanna bilinguals, who represent a new, mostly urban grouping which, much to the surprise of many Northern Irish nationalists, have managed to decouple language from the simplistic Herderian certainties of the nineteenth century. While it is unlikely that even this societal cleavage will have much bearing on the future of the Irish language over the next hundred years, it is exactly this sort of pool of literate, non-traditional group of

young speakers who provided the raw material from which the Jewish immigrants of the early aliyot to Palestine 'grew' their new Hebrew-speaking, urbanised polis.

Reactive nationalism with its reactive recipe of burning embassies, shooting soldiers and ethnic cleansing, unlike the profound language-encompassing revolution adumbrated by Harshav (1993) in the case of the Hebrew language, is simply not enough to support and sustain such a profound phenomenon as language shift. The revival of a language cannot be based, practically or ideologically, on the negative motivation of being 'agin something', which, at the end of the day, is at the heart of reactive nationalism. Simply put, the revival of the Irish language was - and is - beyond both the will and ability of the Irish people. George Mason's sharpsighted pre-famine survey of Tullaroan, Co. Kilkenny, cited earlier, sets the seal on the matter and no amount of reactive rhetoric will undo this reality.

The History of the Bni Balut Family: Muhammad Ali Taha's Galilee

Come all you young rebels, and list while I sing
For the love of one's country is a terrible thing
It banishes fear with the speed of a flame
And it makes us all part of the patriot game
('The Patriot Game', Dominic Behan)

وبقى السر مكتوما بيننا

And the secret remained hidden between us (Taha 2004: 33)

The five tropes of reactive nationalism come together in Muhammad Ali Taha's novel, *Sirat Bni Balut* (Taha 2004): language, land, love and war, violence and the changing image of the enemy. The action of the novel takes place in the villages and towns north of Acre, between the coastline and Tiberias, during the period of the great revolt (1936-1939). This has been referred to as 'the first Intifada' (Townshend 1989). *Sirat Bni Balut* is a tale of personal, social and political turmoil

which centres round the figure of one Mustafa Balut, the son of a widowed mother. In the exposition of the life-path of young Mustafa, it is the personification of reactive nationalism at rural level.

The landscape of the pre-War of 1948 Galilee is well delineated in Muhammad Ali Taha's novel. It is a hilly landscape of small towns and villages, depending for their existence on the Galilean cities of Tiberias, Acre, Haifa and Safad. It is a landscape ripe for the guerrilla/terrorist campaigns of the Palestinian nationalist insurgents. The natives know the landscape the way the IRA flying columns in Cork and Kerry knew their territory in the Irish War of Independence and the way Republican active service units in the seventies and eighties in South Armagh, Tyrone and Fermanagh, in Northern Ireland, knew their own territory. They know where a dog will bark late at night and which safe house can be counted on. The smaller Jewish settlements springing up in the Galilee-particular in the Jezreel Valley/Marj 'Ibn Amr, are seen, from the local Palestinian perspective, as intruders into the Palestinian pastoral. For the moment, however, in the world of Muhammad Ali Taha's novel, it is the British who are the enemy.

This fact is cemented into the consciousness of young Mustafa Balut when his father is killed by a British officer during a raid on the village. There is no going back emotionally and politically for the young man now. The reality of reactive nationalism does the rest: a British officer has killed the young man's father, therefore the British are the enemy. Young Mustafa makes a name for himself when he challenges taboos by visiting the graveyard at night. He challenges authority when he steals food from the sheikh. He flies in the face of his own lowly social standing - as an apprentice ploughman and widow's son - when he has a passionate affair with one of the effendi's wives and lives to tell the tale. When he moves from the village

to Acre, he works in a match factory run by a Jewish overseer. 'It became clear to me that the workers were Arab while those in charge were Jewish' (Taha 2004: 93). His radicalisation comes about when he is introduced to the Young Arab Men's Club and begins to see the bigger picture.

> 'Do you know who our enemy is?'
> I thought for a moment and was about to say 'My enemy is the effendi. If I don't kill him, he will kill me.' But he let me off the hook and said
> 'Our enemy is the English.'
> I almost shouted back at him 'Yes.' The enemy killed my father. His blood won't go unavenged (Taha 2004: 94-95)

In the village of Kafr al-Zaatar, the triumvirate of effendi, sheikh and mukhtar reign supreme. This is the Palestinian world of small town life. It is inevitable that these tensions will out. When the effendi is seen to have betrayed the nationalist cause, young Mustafa finds yet another reason for seeking to kill him. In the end, however, it is the innocent Palestinian policeman, 'Abd al-Karim, who takes the bullet and Mustafa is left with guilt at the murder of a loyal compatriot. It is the sort of collateral damage central to all low-level campaigns of violence. The inevitable internal quarrelling develops as the campaign drags on.

كلب الافندي افندي

The effendi's dog is an effendi himself

The image of the enemy in the novel is multi-faceted and changing: the British, the conservative forces of effendi, mukhtar and sheikh and, emerging from the shadows, the Jewish settlers. Nevertheless, it is the holders of the mandate for Palestine, the British government and its agents, who bear the brunt of the violence. The sectarian/anti-settler campaign is never far away however. While the major Arab-Jewish conflict in the Galilee will not take place until after the Second World

War and the imminent ending of the British Mandate for Palestine, the stage is set for the next round: the 'native-settler' row. For the moment, however, the enemy is the occupier and overlord: the British government and its agents.

Muhammad Ali Taha's text touches on one of the more vexing questions relating to revolutions and revolts: what happens to the revolutionaries when the war is over? As with the case of Northern Ireland, as opposed to Southern Ireland, the revolt/revolution cannot be said, in any meaningful way, to have been successful. In the Palestinian case, the Great Revolt led, unexpectedly, to the consolidation of the Jewish Yishuv and, ultimately, the Jewish victory in the 1947-1948 Israeli War of Independence. There were no Palestinian victors, only survivors, external and internal refugees. In the Northern Irish case, peace, at the moment, is predicated on the sense that neither side can either win nor be seen to win. In this sort of scenario, the footsoldiers of the revolution, especially at grassroots level, tend to get left behind. The case of a number of the Northern Irish Republican hunger-strikers, such as Ciaran Nugent and Brendan 'the Dark' Hughes, is instructive here. Men who were lynchpins of both the physical force campaign and the civil disobedience campaign of the 1981 hunger strike, 'after the ball was over', collapsed into mental confusion and, in other cases, into criminality. The messages are confusing: if there is no clear 'win', the heroes of the revolution come out badly; if the war drags on, as it has done in the Israeli-Palestinian case, long-term criminality and chaos ensues.

Israel, Palestine and Ireland: Two Weddings and a Funeral

'Language was a synonym for homeland…our landscape…the Hebrew was our landscape…'
Aharon Megged[14]

The ancestral languages of the Jewish and (predominantly Muslim) Arab polities of Israel and Palestine are wedded and welded to their respective landscapes in a way which is not the case with the ancestral language of the island of Ireland. When we look at the trope of language in the Irish, Israeli and Palestinian novels, through the prism of nationalism, as we have seen, we are faced with varying and complex situations. The Hebrew revival in the Yishuv/Palestine was presaged by the inculcation of both language habits and attitudes in the diaspora, the *Tarbut* Hebrew language schools of Poland being just one practical example mentioned by Megged (Megged 2007). In the Palestinian case, unlike the Irish case, occupation and dispossession, while it converted the Arabic language into, relatively speaking, a language of low-economic utility, did not succeed in extinguishing the Arabic language either at the lower or higher socio-economic levels. For Hebrew to succeed, as has been pointed out earlier, Yiddish had to be degraded to the point where it was no longer a serious contended for first national language. This involved both direct and indirect subversion of the linguistic contender as Even-Zohar, notes.

> Tel Aviv, Herzl Street. (It happens before World War 1). A group of children pour out of the Herzlia Gymnasium. Two famous Yiddishists (zealous of Yiddishist ideology), are passing by, having come to visit Palestine, and the elder one says to the other: 'The Zionists boast that Hebrew is becoming their natural tongue for the children of Palestine. I will now show you that they are lying. I will tweak one of the boy's ears, and I promise you that he

[14] ***Personal interview (recorded). Tel Aviv. October 2007.***

> will not cry out Ima (i.e., mummy in Hebrew) but mame, in Yiddish.
> So saying, he approached one of the boys and tweaked his ear. The boy turned on him and shouted : hamor! (donkey in Hebrew). The Yiddishist turned to his friend and said: 'I'm afraid the Zionists are right.' (Even-Zohar 1997)

While a minority of Palestinians, such as Shammas and Kashua, write in what might be called the 'language of Hebrew hegemony', this is unlikely to expand or, perhaps, even be sustained. Motivations for writing in a language not one's own, culturally speaking, can vary from the pragmatic through the political to the personal (Tannenbaum 2003). In the case of Israeli Hebrew writers whose mother tongue was Arabic, such as Sami Michael, the transition from mother tongue/cultural tongue (Arabic) to state tongue (Hebrew) was a complex one, involving much more than ideology. The fact that many of these writers, initially at any rate, were located on the left of the political spectrum before their transition to Hebrew, is worth commenting on (Snir 2006). A small number of writers, such as the Druze academic Naim Araidi, manage to straddle both fences, linguistically speaking (Snir 2001).

In the Irish case, writers tend, by and large, to work in the language of greatest utility: English. A small minority write, for a shrinking audience, in Irish. The Irish speaking polity has been discussed in similar terms to that of Rhaeto-Romansch, in Switzerland (Dalby 2003: 112-113). While the engine of nationalist agitation may well have been decoupled from the Irish revivalists wagon in the South of Ireland, in the North of Ireland, language still remains a touchy topic, be that language, English, Irish or Ulster-Scots (Nic Craith 2001). The clash between 'the leprechaun language' (the derisory term given to Irish/Gaelic by certain Unionist commentators) and the 'hamely tongue' (i.e., Ulster-Scots) is unlikely to result in a great burgeoning of literature on either side of the sectarian divide. The message from this is clear enough: reactive nationalism, being predicated on a negative,

simply cannot sustain revival and, probably not even language maintenance. The simplicity of the 'separatist discourse' in this regard, mitigated against a deeper understanding of the role of language in the formation of a post-independence society.

This makes the revival of Hebrew and the emergence of a modern Hebrew literature all the more remarkable. It also makes the case of Palestinian writers within Israel infinitely more complex. Hebrew and Arabic (both literary and colloquial), it might be said, are two languages sharing the same landscape. The relationship is an asymmetrical one, from many perspectives. While Arabic may not have the political prestige of Hebrew, within the higher echelons of Israeli society, most younger Palestinians within Israel are very *au fait* with the hegemonic language which is Hebrew. The same can be said for native speakers of Irish in the South of Ireland. It is, practically speaking, not necessary for Hebrew speakers (the majority) to know Arabic at any deep level any more than it is necessary for English speakers (the majority) to know Irish at any serious level. Nevertheless, while Arabic is a sub-set of the greater Arab/Arabic-speaking world, Irish can lay no such claim and, as such, its future - or lack of it - lies within the boundaries of the state. The sometime soulmate of Hebrew, Yiddish, while experiencing something of a belated cultural revival, will never again be a *mamaloschen* in the old sense. Any consideration of the writers within these various politically-charged polities, must take these linguistic factors into account.

From Mapu (19th century writer of the 'first Hebrew novel) through Brenner, through Megged to Sami Michael, we see a shaky if distinct line of development. Mapu, writing a biblical Hebrew to decode modern realities gives way to Brenner, writing in an emergent Hebrew of an emergent polity, while Megged, in his novels,

could be said to be a literary and linguistic laboratory of the Hebrew revival which is further compounded by the 'transfer' of Sami Michael, and Arabic-speaking Iraqi Jew, into Hebrew.

In the Palestinian case, although the colloquial dialects of Israel/Palestine are clearly distinct from those of the surrounding Levantine area, writers, by and large, tend not to use *'ammiyya* (colloquial) as a 'grounding' factor. This is as true of Ilyas Khouri as it is of Muhammad 'Ali Taha and even Ghassan Kanafani. There are many reasons for this, not least of those being the difficulties posed for readers in Arab countries understanding local Palestinian dialect, in dialogue. The prestige of *fusha* (literary) Arabic is, of course, another factor in all of this. Nevertheless, a writer such as Muhammad 'Ali Taha has clearly engaged to write in what Mafouz called 'the middle language', a sort of trick-of-the-light compromise between pure Palestinian colloquial (the language of the protagonist of *Sirat Bni Balut*) and literary Arabic. It is a linguistic compromise that is carried off successfully in the novel. The verisimilitude provided by the mixture of high and low registers lends credibility to the text.

When we consider the three contemporary novels of Megged, Taha and O'Conghaile side by side, we are able to come to some understanding of the linguistic landscape against which they are written. Taha's novel of the 1936-1939 Revolt is firmly set in the hills and dales of the Western Galilee, in the sort of 'shadow country' we get a glimpse of in A.B. Yehoshua's *The Lover* (Yehoshua 1977), where Palestinian workers come in to Haifa from their villages and slip back home as dusk approaches. It is a world that is virtually unknown to the average Israeli Jew and, even less so, since the disturbances of October 2000, at the start of the *al-Aksa* Intifada. Not only is the language of the novel invisible to Israeli Jews, so

too is the presence, in their midst, of some twenty per cent of the Arab Israeli population. The placental barrier of high utility/low utility language is a one way system: the Palestinians who work in and among the Jewish majority have access, linguistically and culturally, to the life of the majority; the Jewish majority, as displayed in *The Lover* (Yehoshua 1977), have no such luxury. The implications are unsettling. The revolt which started officially in 1936, has simply settled down. Leaving Khouri's *Gate of the Sun* aside, the post-War of 1948 novel of Palestinian life in the Galilee has still to be written.

O'Conghaile's *Sna Fir* is a comic excursus on gay Gaeltacht life and the relationship of that life to the (linguistic) diaspora of the majority English-speaking Republic of Ireland. The rump linguistic statelet of south Connemara, the largest Gaeltacht (Irish-speaking area) in the country, is physically removed from the other main gaeltachtaí, in Donegal, Cork and Kerry, such as they are. The only real connection between them is through the airwaves: Irish language radio and television, admittedly a burgeoning area. For all its comic tone, however, there is a certain sadness to the narrative of *Sna Fir*, which has little to do with the subject matter or the orientation of the protagonist. This is because the novel gives us a glimpse of a marginalised language that is fast fading away, despite all the nationalist rhetoric, and which is a shadow of its former self, linguistically and socially. While Hebrew has penetrated the remotest villages in the Western Galilee, Palestinian Arabic remains, if we omit security, legal and bureaucratic elements, relatively free of the influence of Hebrew, to any great extent. It is only among the Druze community that code-switching issues and lexical confusion are major issues. This itself says much about the Druze relationship with the majority community. Both

Hebrew and Palestinian Arabic, in literature and lore, betray a past, present and future.

The despairing tone, beneath all the wisecracks, evident in *Sna Fir*, might be described, in Irish itself, as *gaire Sheain dóite* ('the laughter of burnt John' - a self - conscious snigger at one's own folly). In the shrinking world of the 'gaeltacht Galilee' of south Connemara, Donegal, Cork and Kerry, we see the failure of Irish nationalism to conceptually cope with the notion of independence that is anything other than territorial. In the parallel linguistic universes of Palestinian Arabic and Israeli Hebrew, we see the reality that, for Palestinian Arabs and Israeli Jews, language is landscape is land. It marks a far profounder understanding of the relationship between life and language than the reactive nationalist Irish one, past or present.

'I feel a great attachment to Yiddish...
I feel a great empathy for a person like Foiglman..'
Aharon Megged (2007)

Aharon Megged's *Foiglman*, deals with the supremacy of Hebrew over the enfeebled *ostjudische* language of Yiddish. Nowhere in the story, is there any mention of the presence of Arabic. This absence itself is a comment: it is possible to live a life, as an Israeli Jew, within the confines of the State of Israel, without recourse to Arabic, at anything more than the superficial level. More importantly however, Foiglman details the drubbing Yiddish receives at the hands of Hebrew. As with Joyce's comment, mentioned earlier, which is thought to relate to his relationship with the Irish language

> April 14. John Alphonsus Mulrennan has just returned from the west of Ireland. European and Asiatic papers please copy. He told us he met an old man there in a mountain cabin. Old man had red eyes and short pipe. Old man spoke Irish. Mulrennan spoke Irish.

> Then old man and Mulrennan spoke English. Mulrennan spoke to him about universe and stars. Old man sat, listened, smoked, spat. Then said:
>
> -Ah, there must be queer terrible creatures at the latter end of the world.
>
> I fear him. I fear his red-rimmed horny eyes. It is with him I must struggles all through this night till day come, till he or I lie dead, gripping him by the sinewy throat till...till what? Till he yield to me?
>
> No. I mean no harm. (Joyce 1971: 251-252)

We understand that Megged is, a little wistfully perhaps, feeling empathy for a lost language. It is a lachrymose trope that has been parodied by, among others, Samuel Beckett, in the Irish case. Underneath it is the hardnosed linguistic reality which the Hebrew revivalists of the second and third Aliya understood: there is only one *mamaloschen* and the creation of linguistic facts-on-the-ground are as important, and maybe even more so, than territorial ones. In effect, Foiglman reflects the Palestinian Jewish success in creating a country almost a generation before the creation of the state. Muhammad 'Ali Taha's *Sirat Bni Balut*, on the other hand, represents the Palestinian Arab success in preserving cultural, linguistic, social and psychological autonomy, even at the expense of lost land. If, for the Israelis, there is a continuity of linguistic landscape, for Palestinians on both sides of the Green Line, there is a future because there is a linguistic continuity, a landscape of language, which even the 'clearances' have failed to eradicate. It is a point which Ilyas Khoury seeds in his War of 1948 narrative in *Gate of the Sun*.

> The Castilians didn't persecute the Muslim Arabs and the Jews simply to throw them out, for no expulsion, no matter on how large a scale, can drive everyone out. The Castilians imposed their religion and their language on the Andalusians, and that's why their victory was definitive; that's why al Andalus was assimilated into Spain and that was the end of the matter. Here, on the other hand, our keys aren't the keys of the houses that were stolen; our keys are the Arabic language. Israel doesn't want us to assimilate and become Israelis, and it doesn't impose its religion and

> language on us. The expulsion took place in '48, but it wasn't total. (Khoury 2005: 388-389)

When we look at the works of Padraig O 'Conaire, on the other hand, and, in particular, the short story collection *Scothscéalta*, written at the height of the revivalist campaign, we are given a glimpse inside a what-might-have-been world: a rural-urban 'Gaelic entity' which might have paralleled the 'Hebrew entity' which came into being long before the foundation of the State of Israel and *al-Nakba*.

Conclusion

Territoriality is at the heart of both the Irish and Israeli-Palestinian situations. Both ideology-based nationalism - in the case of Zionism and Southern Irish Republicanism - and reactive nationalism, in the case of Palestinian nationalism and Northern Irish nationalism - subtend the same circle of territoriality. The contrasting takes on territoriality are well reflected in the novels discussed.

Pat McCabe and Eugene McCabe's work, situated as it is, for the most part, in the region of South Ulster, straddling the border between the Irish Republic and Northern Ireland, reflects the 'longue durée' realities of Irish nationalism on the ground and its connect with territoriality, at the most parochial level. Memories of both planter and peasant, stretching back as far as the 17th century, burnished bright by the propagandists from both sides, are studded within the narratives of Pat McCabe's *Breakfast on Pluto* and Eugene McCabe's *Cancer.* While it is recognisably the same war, the urban realities as related by Glenn Patterson in *That Which Was,* which are part-and-parcel of the urban matrix of the conflict, offer a contrast. The reality of the transplantation of rural sectarianism and territoriality from the Ulster countryside to 19th century Belfast, so well highlighted by Hirst (Hirst 2002) is clear in Patterson's novel. Memory, however reconstructed, and memorial, however artificial (after the fashion of Hobsbawm), are perceived as real. In the urban situation, in working-class Protestant and Catholic communities, however, it is presence rather than possession which is at stake. Patterson's post-conflict (largely Protestant) East Belfast, is an earnest of this. Territory is more than

damp fields over the border - it is also the urban red-brick maze of back-to-back houses in both Catholic and Protestant working-class areas. And Patterson's narrative points up one more uncomfortable reality: the hangover from 'the Troubles' that is post-conflict criminality, the *quis custodiet custodies* quandary that relates to the former paramilitaries who have lost their place in the sun.[15]

A.B. Yehoshua's *The Liberated Bride* ties territoriality in with language. When the Israeli Ashkenazi academic, Rivkin, wanders out of the fastness of his Arabic department, in Haifa University, into the hinterland of Palestinian Arab villages in the Western Galilee, he dons the dialect of the region. It is a dialect which marks both the language of those who fled in 1948 and those who remained. Linguistic reality reflects territorial integrity here. But language is a one-way valve, socio-linguistically speaking: Rivkin, exceptionally for an Israeli Jew, understands the language of the minority Arab population on his doorstep even though he is at an academic remove from the reality of their lives.

The Israeli-Palestinian writer, Said Kashua, carries matters to an even more complex level, in terms of the overlap between territory and language. The mothertongue V motherland rift is everywhere visible in *Dancing Arabs*. *Dancing Arabs* presents, as does Seamus Deane's *Reading in the Dark*, the bitter backtaste of survival in its mouth. In as much as Northern Irish Catholics were 'left behind', from a territorial point of view, after the partition of Ireland in 1922, Kashua's Palestinian fellows were cut off from their opposite number, on the West Bank and in Lebanon, Syria and Jordan, in 1948. But Kashua's novel, written in Hebrew by an Israeli-Palestinian, goes one stage further: it tackles the messy narrative of 'those who remained' (or 'the Arabs of '48' as they refer to themselves) in the dominant

[15] For a contemporary tale of a writer under running paramilitary threat, see 'A Man of Loyalty and Principles', on the Loyalist playwright Gary Mitchell. The Irish Times. May 2 2009.

language of discourse - Hebrew. Kashua's two-tongued life (with Arabic as the language of 'the hearth' and Hebrew as state language) reflects the conflict of territoriality (an Arab village within a predominantly Jewish state) at the mundane level. Here, Billig's 'Banal Nationalism' (the diurnal workings of the Israeli state) comes into conflict with the resentment of a minority community.

Yahia Yakhlif, on the other hand, goes to the root of the row: the War of 1948 and the loss of Palestine in 1948. The narrative of *A Lake Beyond the Wind* is an impressionistic exercise in catastrophe foreshadowed. Despite the Palestinian leadership in the cities, such as it was, the peasant Palestinian population is portrayed as both outgunned and outclassed in the struggle. The outcome is inevitable: expulsion and exile, across the Jordan, from the town of Semakh, at the foot of the Sea of Galilee. The Palestinians will bring their portmanteau homeland with them, a melange of memories, nostalgia, Palestinian Arabic dialect and family narratives. Ideology aside, possession of land is the nationalist and reactive nationalist trope *par excellence*. Everything else is commentary.

Nationalism, as has been earlier pointed out, needs an Other, a clearly defined enemy. In the early stages of nationalist conflict, the Enemy is easily identified. This provides both a 'clear target' (on many levels) and cohesiveness among the subject people. The image of the enemy, however, is rarely static. Reactive in essence, it mutates over time. Yesterday's Hun is today's hail-fellow-well-met European at an EU sub-committee meeting on farm subsidies.

Seamus Deane's *Reading in the Dark*, effectively the *Bildungsroman* of a young Northern Irish Catholic boy, opens with the easy identification of the British / Unionist (Protestant) enemy. The Other is the victor, in the 1922 partition of Ireland.

The Protestant planter whose hegemony is never in doubt, buttressed from afar by the British taxpayer, and supported, locally, by the bulwark of discriminatory practices, such as gerrymandering, and the paramilitary 'B Specials', a largely Protestant police force. As we progress through the narrative however, other 'enemies' hove into view. The Republic of Ireland, seemingly indifferent to the plight of their separated Northern brethren, is the object of scorn. Then the 'hero narrative' of resistance itself is subverted by a trope not unknown in Irish literature - the informer. It becomes clear that the enemy is almost as likely to be in the tent as outside it.

Sahar Khalifeh's *The Inheritance* cocks a snoot at the pieties of the revolutionaries, a process which began in a much earlier novel, *Wild Thorns*. The studied certainties of nationalists are undermined by the whiff of corruption, apathy and pure greed, in this narrative of post-Oslo Palestine. *The Inheritance* is not so much a novel of a revolution sold down the river as much as an indication of how, the longer the war goes on, the more corrupt both footsoldiers and elites become. Khalifeh's novel is the type of work which could not have been written in the 'Kanafani generation', when things were clearer, if not simpler. It is the sort of painful narrative which comes with the realisation, among the vanquished, that their erstwhile defenders may some day prove to be their newest jailers. It is the sort of complicating narrative necessary for a people to emerge from the corrupting certainties of reactive nationalist struggle.

Eskhol Nevo's *Homesick* represents a nod towards a particular Israeli nightmare: what if the Palestinian enemy returns? It is less about the possibility of military defeat and more about the mundane realities of houses, homes and fields being the target of *'al-'awdah'*. Nevo personalises the enemy as a Palestinian

labourer who happens, in the course of his work, to stumble on his family home, abandoned in the War of 1948. A multi-viewpoint novel, both the Israeli and Palestinian enemy are seen across the divide. Tropes of Palestinian life flit in and out of the narrative: the key to the old house; a secret stash left behind in the occupied house; the '*kantara*', the pointed archway over the doorway is a token of an earlier Palestinian presence. There is a sense in Nevo's novel, that the enemy are everywhere and nowhere and beyond the reaches of simple political speculation. A similar multi-mode representation of the enemy is to be seen in Khoury's *Gate of the Sun*, when the Israeli woman Eli Dweik (of Lebanese origin) is confronted with the reality of a Palestinian woman returning to her former home. In both narratives, the conflict is reduced to an encounter between ordinary souls blighted by a bigger question. If Nevo's *Homesick* reflects the terror of the returning Palestinian, as a trope of Israeli society in general, Khoury's *Gate of the Sun* points up the fact that the enemy is ever present on the doorstep.

The representation of the reactive nationalist tropes of Love and War vary greatly across the three novels studied under this rubric. Edna O'Brien's *The House of Splendid Isolation* posits a love affair, such as it is, between a Northern Irish Republican gunman on the run, and a southern Irish 'lady of the manor' in the South of Ireland. The war portrayed in the novel is a patchy, anachronistic one. It is also clear that the irredentism is on the side of the Northern Irish Republican - his southern comrades have no great lust for the 'victory' of a united Ireland in the morning. The bitty nature of the campaign bears more resemblance to the Arab Revolt (1936-1939) portrayed in Taha's *Sirat Bni Balut*, or the War of Independence in Ireland (1920-1922) than it does to the current Israeli-Palestinian theatre of war.

In Edna O'Brien's novel, the unwinnable war - unwinnable because the second party to the conflict (the Irish of the Republic of Ireland) has no desire for victory - has degenerated into a war of ditches and sneak attacks and muddled strategies. In Muhammad Ali Taha's novel, the reactive nationalist impulse towards war is clear: the young Muhamad Balut sees his father killed in front of him by a British soldier. Thus his enmity is first directed at them and then at the Jewish 'settlers' who follow in their wake. The love visible in the novel is of the romantic sort, tied in with the image of the *feday* as liberator and lover.

The images of love and war in Khoury's *Gate of the Sun*, on the other hand, are altogether more unsettling. The running narrative of refugees and resistance is set within the context of the Western Galilee and Southern Lebanon, just a stone's throw away. While Khoury doesn't seek to downplay the calamity of the War of 1948 for the Palestinians left behind in what is now Northern Israel, he stealthily subverts the reified image of the *feday* as unblemished hero, while pointing up the sacrifices made for the cause by his hapless lover, who is both mother and martyr to the Palestinian nation. The low level war of attrition portrayed in *Gate of the Sun* is not a million miles away from that glossed in Edna O'Brien's *The House of Splendid Isolation*, even if the time-frames of flight and expulsion are some three hundred years apart.

Eli Amir's *Yasmin*, although it finds its 'ground zero' in post-1967 Jerusalem, gives a hint of the greater conflict without. The rise of the PLO and local irredentism are noted in the novel while the greater Arab-Israeli (Islamic-Israeli would be relatively premature here) conflict is clearly visible, on the fringes. The 'love across the barricades' tale is a far from simple one. As regards war, the message is clear: the war will go on. There is a sense - rightly or wrongly - of an

opportunity lost, in the immediate post Six Day War scenario and more than a suggestion that Israelis of Sephardic Jewish origin might have saved the day, in that they were far closer to the realities of Arab (Muslim and Christian) life than the Ashkenazi elites of the day. There is a sense too, of the gathering strength of the Palestinian irredentist campaign being tied into the great Arab-Israeli struggle. The same love which survives the struggle in *Gate of the Sun*, between the *feday* and his woman, cannot, of course, survive the exigencies of a 'love across the barricades' scenario in *Yasmin*. This has nothing to do with nationalist ideology, of course, but everything to do with emotional realities on the ground. The 'fallback' emotional position, in love as in war, is a reactive phenomenon. We cannot, despite the ideological overlay, be anything but what we are and must, by and large, act according to the dictates not so much of our beliefs as of our most intimate yearnings for love and war. This is the hard, sad message of both *Yasmin* and *Gate of the Sun.*

Religion performs very different functions within Northern Irish society and Israeli and Palestinian society. It has come to function as marker of the conflict in the Northern Irish situation; in the case of Israelis and Palestinians, it is integral to any understanding of the conflict, secularising Israeli society aside. It is the sense that religious differences are essential to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, in a more than ideological way, which marks out the differences between the two conflicts.

Eoin McNamee's *Resurrection Man* is predicated on the sectarian campaign of the Protestant murder gang, the Shankill Butchers. Nevertheless, the term 'Protestant' must be glossed here for it has connotations, in the Northern Irish working class context, which it does not have in, say, Zurich or Amsterdam. Although doctrinal differences have been played up (individual conscience, birth

control, domination of Rome in the south), in reality, the Protestant paramilitaries portrayed in McNamee's novel would be as hard pressed to engage in a theological discussion as their Catholic (nominally, at any rate) IRA opposite number. The sort of angels-on-the-head-of-a-pin theology extant on the fringes of Religious-Nationalist Zionism, on the one hand, and Palestinian Islamism, on the other, do not exist in the Northern Ireland situation. Although Akenson (Akenson 1992) argues convincingly for the transfer of the concept of covenant to Northern Irish Protestant settlers, the tie between religion and land simply does not have the same cohesion it does in either Israel or the Arab world. Israel may be *terra sancta* to Judaism and Saudi Arabia *terra sancta* to Islam, but Ulster is not the Holy Land and Belfast is not Jerusalem. And there are two additional elements absent, besides 'embedded religion': book and tongue. Neither party in Northern Ireland can lay claim either to a holy book that ties land to fealty to a religion, or a language specific to that religion. The Irish language is not scripturally endowed as the language of a people and a land; English, the language of the primarily Protestant planters of both Northern and Southern Ireland, receives no such kudos either. Both Islam and Judaism have book, land and language hardwired into their religious cores. This contrast is clear, when Eoin McNamee's *Resurrection Man* is set beside Izzat Ghazzawi's *Jabal Nebu* and Chaim Sabatto's *Adjusting Sights*.

The Islam seen in *Jabal Nebu* is one that is as local as the popular Islam in Salih's *Season of Migration to the North*. It is a function of time, place and people. Ghazzawi subverts the conquest narrative of Joshua bin Nun by having his Palestinian refugees in Jordan prepare for the crossing back across the river to the Promised Land. Religion is neither a political *sine qua non* here nor an accessory either. It pre-dates the current conflict while giving a cohesion to the society in

which it is lodged. The sense of land, language, revealed religion and book are deeply embedded in the novel's tone and texture. The dustbowl climate of the heights above the Jordan Valley, in ancient Moab and its environs, infuse the novel. The Arab patriarch Haj Ibrahim and his wife, Aisha Bint Abdullah Muti, want to return. But no return is in sight. Like Moses, Haj Ibrahim will be fated to die on the further bank without reaching the Promised Land. But it is the grassroots reality of Islam within the refugee Arab society that is most important here: no arcane ideology is at play. This is not the Islam of the zealots of Gaza or the 'Ulama of al-Azhar but, rather, the heartfelt *Heimweh* for a land lost. And that Heimweh is reactive: a reaction to land and a way of life lost which is not contingent on ideology for its power.

Chaim Sabatto's *Adjusting Sights*, on the other hand, deals with a self-conscious, highly literate reading of its own religious traditions. The existential threat to the State of Israel and its citizens, as mentioned above, has no parallel in the Irish conflict. In *Adjusting Sights*, religion functions almost as a framing device for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It is as though the biblical and rabbinical traditions with which the book is layered, provide a cosmic rational for the conflict. There is a sense of the ancient and the modern colliding and colluding here: the El of the ancient Israelites with the Elohim of the Israelis. Primitive cosmogonies are hinted at. Gog and Magog wait in the wings. It is simply not possible to view the Northern Ireland conflict in such a way, unless with the intention of irony. The religious elements of the conflict depicted in *Adjusting Sights*, and to a lesser extent in *Jabal Nebu*, can be seen to be an integral part of the whole. It is reasonable to conclude that, while religion may once have been part maker of the Northern Ireland / Ulster conflict, it is now more like a marker; in the Israeli-Palestinian case, religion

functions as far more than a marker. It is more like the representation of the core differences between two ancient ethnies. The dusty, derelict mosques left behind in the villages of the Galilee find their parallel in the sacked synagogues of Gaza. There is one more point worth noting here: religion as a feature of conflict in Northern Ireland, is much more a signifier of that conflict in the lower strata of society. We cannot say this with respect to either Israeli or Palestinian society, no matter how secularised the former has become. The three novels reflect these realities.

Language, in the Herderian, determinist *Weltanschauung* of salon nationalism, is a prime qualification for the status of nationhood. Irish nationalism, in the late 19th century and early 20th century, followed this paradigm, if half-heartedly. Along with physical force nationalism, land agitation, religious and social agitation, it provided part of the bedrock of Irish nationalist ideology, such as it was. Nevertheless, the understanding of the profound difficulties of language revival / expansion, not to mention the profound implications of language shift, seemed to have passed most Irish nationalist commentators by. Certainly, the sort of serious, philosophical and practical conceptualisation of language revival shown by the early Zionists, as noted by Harshav (Harshav 1993) seems not to have been a feature of Irish nationalist thinking. It is this shallowness of purpose and practice which sets apart the successful Hebrew revival from the unsuccessful Gaelic revival. This has unavoidable implications for the study, not only of Irish literature, but of Israeli and Palestinian literature.

Aside from the reactive nationalist rhetoric noted by O'Leary (O'Leary 1994), with respect to the Gaelic revivalists, modern Irish literature, being mostly written in English, bears witness to a broken linguistic and cultural traditions. Israeli

literature, on the other hand, is manifest evidence of the recoupling with a tradition. Palestinian literature, furthermore, marks the survival of an intellectual and artistic tradition, despite dispersal and exile. We cannot avoid bearing this in mind when we reflect on novels written within these three traditions.

Aharon Megged, veteran Israeli novelist, sensitizes us to this in *Foiglman.* The anti-Yiddish stream in the Hebrew revival is embodied in the form of the chief protagonist. Before what Arab propagandists used to term 'the Zionist entity' (الكيان الصهيوني) was the 'Hebrew entity'. That is to say, one of the chief achievements of Zionism was to create a political entity before the foundation of the state, which had a common, revived and ancient language as its binding force. There is no equivalent either in modern or ancient history. It is an achievement that Irish nationalists can only look on with a mixture of despair, envy and incomprehension. *Foiglman* shows the centrality of language in the foundation both of the State of Israel and the Hebrew-speaking polity. Curiously enough, because language – Hebrew - is a given, in the modern State of Israel, unlike the state's frontiers, it can be taken for granted. A veteran novelist such as Aharon Megged, is writing not only in the tradition of Chaim Yosef Brenner, but also in the tradition of the *Haskalists*, the *piyyutim* (religious poetry) writers of Sephardic Spain and the 'authors' of the Bible itself.

The Gaelic novels considered in the text, written by Padraig O'Conaire - in the early years of the 20th century - and Padraig O' Conghaile (contemporary) are evidence of the failure of Irish nationalism, in its simplistic, reactive mode, to envisage and realise the revival of the ancient language of their supposed ethnie. The revival underway in the time of O'Conaire was fundamentally negative in nature: it was based on the notion that Gaelic's greatest attribute was its 'non-Englishness'. This comes across clearly in O'Leary's account of the pre-state and Irish Free State

periods (1994; 2004). The parallel movements for the revival of Hebrew and Irish reveal interesting dichotomies, among them being the fact that the 'Hebrew entity' extant at the founding of the State of Israel clearly bolstered the frail existence of the state; in the Irish case, the foundation of the Irish Free State (1922), despite its official policy of revival, could be said to have sounded the death knell of revival as the symbolic (i.e., anti-British) power of the language revival movement had lost its *causus belli* once the British withdrew. One is left with the conclusion that, in as much as the Palestinian forces were outclassed militarily by the Jewish forces in 1947- 1948, the revival of the Irish language was simply beyond either the will or the ability of the Irish people. While O'Conaire's early 20th century novel, therefore, reflects the disaffected reality of Gaelic as exilic tongue in London, Dublin and Galway, O'Conghaile's 20th late century novel reveals the current status quo of the language: marginalised, on the Western seaboard, with an ever diminishing circle of speakers and an every diminishing circle of influence in the Irish state.

On a deeper level, the failure of the Irish language revival, when set against the successful Hebrew revival shows that reactive nationalism, an essentially negative phenomenon, is not sophisticated enough for language revival. The fact that the Hebrew revival was an implicit part of Zionist thinking, from the time of the second aliya, was, in part, responsible for the successful revival (Saposnik 2008). That this revival was not based on a reactive and negative nationalism, says much about the ideological strength of Zionism in looking to its own past for its future and in creating a 'Hebrew entity' which preceded the foundation of the state. The survival of Arabic as the communal language within the State of Israel, on the other hand, points both to the strength of that language in adversity and to the fact that Palestinians, even those within the Hebrew-speaking environment, have managed to

keep a continuity of tradition. This has less to do with any ideological factors as with the communal status of Palestinian Arabic within Israel, its status as language of Islam and its power as a prestige language within the Middle East.

The contrast between reactive nationalism and what has been termed *salon nationalism* has been shown to be very great. One of the greatest contrasts between the two is the simple sustainability of the latter. Reactive nationalism, because it is a contingent force, finds itself, ultimately, devoid of ideological backbone when faced with challenges that are more than transient. It is this failure to conceptualise opposition as anything more than reactive which has contributed to the relative failure of both the Northern Irish Republican and Palestinian campaigns. Identities which are based on purely oppositional models of discourse are essentially weak and inevitably self-corrupting. When reactive nationalist campaigns are carried over into the post-independence phase, the type of self-corrupting regime, devoid of self-criticism which develops and which is ultimately destructive of its own people, is what often ensues. The recent history of independent Zimbabwe is a good example of this.

The tendency - perhaps the need, even - for nationalism, as a form of political adolescence, to consider itself above criticism, is useful, of course, in encouraging cohesion, during the struggle for independence but, ultimately, destructive of the body politic in the period of independence. One of the roles of the writer in the emergent nation, if it is possible at all to be even tentatively prescriptive, is to be court critic where court jester sufficed, during the independence struggle. This, of course, is easier said than done and the files of Amnesty International are replete with the personal histories of contemporary writers, in post-colonial regimes who

have been tarred with the brush of 'anti-national sentiment', an Orwellian phrase beloved of Irish Free State newspapers, in the nineteen thirties and forties. In the light of the type of criticism of post-colonial regimes heralded by the likes of Memmi (Memmi 2006), himself an early advocate of decolonisation, there is room for a comparative study of writers in both the colonial and post-colonial phases. It is all the more important, therefore, for western well-wishers, be they intellectuals, academics or simply followers of literature and politics, to conspire in what is often a second struggle for independence in these countries: independence from arriviste native despots. It is only in this second-stage rebellion, often against the elites of the revolution themselves, that the goals fondly envisioned in the first stage of 'the national struggle' can be effectively realised.

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INTERVIEWS

Naim Araidi (informal)	Mghar, Israel	September 2007
Ali Taha, Muhammad (recorded)	Kabul, Israel	December 2007
Megged, Aharon (recorded)	Tel Aviv	November 2007
Shukair, M. (recorded)	East Jerusalem	December 2007
Yehoshua, A.B. (informal)	Haifa, Israel	December 2007